# Drug Enforcement Administration

# 2025 NDTA

## National Drug Threat Assessment

U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration

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2025 NDTA

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# Letter from the Acting Administrator

It is my privilege to present the **2025 National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA)**, a comprehensive report that provides a national-level perspective on the threats posed by deadly illicit drugs and the violent transnational criminal organizations responsible for producing the drugs poisoning our communities. This annual assessment from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) provides valuable strategic drug-related intelligence to communities, health professionals, educators, and law enforcement agencies to help inform their response to this crisis.

DEA's goal in publishing the NDTA is to put a spotlight on the immense harm being perpetrated against our country by Mexican cartels and their networks – and to help save lives by raising awareness about the drug crisis. The 2025 NDTA highlights the threat to public health, the rule of law, and national security in the United States posed by the trafficking of powerful synthetic drugs like fentanyl. Drug overdose deaths are finally decreasing across the country, but too many Americans, especially young Americans, are still dying from poisonings caused by drugs like fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine.

The Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel, now designated along with six other transnational criminal organizations as foreign terrorist organizations, are the primary groups producing the illicit synthetic drugs driving U.S. drug poisoning deaths and trafficking these drugs into the United States. The cartels produce fentanyl and methamphetamine in clandestine laboratories in Mexico using precursor chemicals and pill presses sourced from companies in China. Much of the fentanyl is pressed into pills resembling legitimate medication and sold to customers in the United States through social media platforms and messaging applications. They rely on business relationships with drug trafficking organizations in the United States who handle the distribution and sale of drugs, and with Chinese money laundering networks to move drug money quickly and consistently from the United States to Mexico. The cartels are not only fueling the drug poisoning deaths in the United States but also committing egregious acts of violence, threatening the security and stability of our partners across the Western Hemisphere.

DEA, alongside our federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners, is relentless in combatting drug trafficking and defeating the ruthless organizations responsible for poisoning Americans. This collaboration has been key in the seizures of millions of pills containing lethal fentanyl; the extradition and expulsion of cartel members from Mexico to the United States; and the dismantlement of the gangs and other criminal groups responsible for drug-related deaths and violence.

I am especially honored to dedicate this year's NDTA to the memory of Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. I encourage you to read the story of this remarkable agent, man, and father on the next page and join us in renewing our commitment, every day, to this fight.

Respectfully,

Robert Murphy
Acting Administrator
Drug Enforcement Administration

# Dedication to Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena

Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena was more than a DEA agent – he was a Marine, a fireman, a police officer, a husband, and a father. He dedicated his life to service, upholding the highest ideals of justice, integrity, and courage. Over his 11 years with the DEA, he earned numerous awards for his exceptional work, and was posthumously awarded the Administrator's Award of Honor, DEA's highest recognition, for his ultimate sacrifice.

Special Agent Camarena was abducted outside the U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico in 1985 and then tortured and murdered at the hands of cartel operatives. The tragic event sparked Operation Leyenda, the largest homicide investigation DEA has ever conducted, and led to the arrest of high-ranking cartel figures responsible for his death.

Special Agent Camarena's bravery and unwavering commitment to the mission of fighting to keep deadly drugs off American streets remains embedded in the very fabric of this agency – in prevention, education, and justice. His legacy also continues in the Red Ribbon Campaign: the longest-running drug prevention program in U.S. history that was born from his memory and has inspired millions of Americans to commit to a drug-free life.

Four decades later, Rafael Caro Quintero – the man charged in the United States with the torture and murder of Special Agent Camarena – was finally brought to justice. Caro Quintero was expelled to the United States from Mexico in February 2025, along with 28 other fugitive cartel members. The expulsions are a statement to every cartel leader, every trafficker, every criminal poisoning our communities: No matter how long it takes, justice will find you.

They are also a testament to the power of collaboration, made possible through the unwavering commitment of the Department of Justice, the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service, Homeland Security Investigations, and every agency that played a role in serving justice for Special Agent Camarena, his family, and for every DEA employee – past, present, and future – who carries his legacy forward. We invite you to join us in this commitment.

*We Will Never Forget!*

**Frank A. Tarentino II, Special Agent in Charge for DEA New York Division, speaks following a hearing for Rafael Caro Quintero at the Brooklyn Federal Courthouse**

*Source: CNN, March 3, 2025*

## Attorney General Announces 29 Wanted Defendants from Mexico Taken into U.S. Custody

*On February 27, 2025, the United States secured custody of 29 defendants from Mexico who are facing charges in districts around the country relating to racketeering, drug-trafficking, murder, illegal use of firearms, money laundering, and other crimes. The defendants taken into U.S. custody include leaders of drug cartels recently designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists, such as the Sinaloa Cartel, Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), Cártel del Noreste (formerly Los Zetas), La Nueva Familia Michoacana, and Cártel de Golfo (Gulf Cartel). These defendants are collectively alleged to have been responsible for the importation into the United States of massive quantities of poison, including cocaine, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin, as well as associated acts of violence.*

*One name stands above the rest for the men and women of the DEA — Rafael Caro Quintero. Caro Quintero, a cartel kingpin who unleashed violence, destruction, and death across the United States and Mexico, has spent four decades atop DEA's most wanted fugitives list. Caro Quintero is responsible for the brutal torture and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena.*

*Many of the defendants were subject to longstanding U.S. extradition requests. The Mexican government elected to transfer the defendants in response to the Justice Department's efforts to pursue total elimination of these Cartels.*

*Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, February 27, 2025*

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# Executive Summary

Mexican cartels' production, trafficking, and distribution of powerful illicit synthetic drugs, chiefly fentanyl[a] and methamphetamine, represent a dire threat to public health, the rule of law, and national security in the United States. The Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation Cartels (CJNG), together with their procurement, distribution, and financial support networks stretching across Latin America, China, and other key global nodes, remain the dominant threats for the trafficking of these and other drugs into the United States. In the 12-month period ending in October 2024, 84,076 Americans died from a drug overdose, according to the most recent available provisional statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), underscoring the devastating effect these cartels have on our country. Although these numbers show a 25 percent decline since the same 12-month period last year – when the country lost 112,910 people to drug poisonings – demonstrating positive momentum in the fight against these drugs and the organizations trafficking them, the threat remains grave. The trend is hopeful, however. October 2024 was the eleventh consecutive month in which CDC reported a reduction, and the current statistics represent the largest 12-month reduction in drug overdose deaths ever recorded.

Fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine, are the primary drivers of fatal drug overdose deaths nationwide, while other illicit drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and diverted prescription opioids still contribute meaningfully to the drug threat landscape in the United States. However, overdose and poisoning deaths involving fentanyl and other synthetic opioids caused more deaths than all other categories of drugs. This exceptionally deadly drug – often pressed into pills resembling legitimate medications and presented as authentic to customers or mixed into other drugs – creates a heightened risk of fatal overdose for unsuspecting or otherwise opioid-naïve users.

The production and trafficking of drugs by Mexican cartels has fundamentally altered the drug and criminal landscapes in North America. The cartels capitalize on the relative ease of synthetic drug production compared to the physical and environmental limitations of traditional plant-based drug production to generate immense revenues. The cartels maintain steady supply chains for obtaining the precursor chemicals, primarily from China and India, necessary to produce these synthetic drugs. The Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation Cartels, in particular, control clandestine production sites in Mexico, smuggling routes into the United States, and distribution hubs in key U.S. cities. The cartels work with U.S. drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and violent gangs to distribute drugs throughout the country, all exploiting social media and messaging applications to extend their reach to a larger and younger customer base. The cartels' extensive, complex, and adaptable networks present formidable challenges across the U.S. law enforcement, national security, regulatory, financial, and health and wellness sectors.

a. *The use of "fentanyl" throughout this report refers strictly to illicit fentanyl manufactured by criminal organizations, not to the pharmaceutical fentanyl used in clinical settings.*

# TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

## Overview

Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)—including international drug cartels and other violent criminal groups—threaten the safety of the American people, the national security of the United States, and the safety and stability of the Western Hemisphere. These organizations produce and traffic multi-ton quantities of illicit drugs, routinely engage in acts of violence and extortion, and orchestrate the flow of contraband and people through territories along the U.S.-Mexico border. These organizations launder millions of dollars in illicit proceeds from criminal activities using Chinese money laundering networks (CMLNs), money service businesses (MSBs), front and shell companies, cryptocurrency, trade-based exchanges, and corrupt banking officials – and by simply smuggling bulk cash across borders – all of which compromise the U.S. financial system and undermine economic security. In recognition of the threat posed by these international drug cartels and violent organizations, the United States designated eight TCOs as foreign terrorist organizations.

### Designation of six Mexican Cartels and two Violent International Gangs as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)

On February 20, 2025, the State Department officially designated eight transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) and specially designated global terrorists (SDGTs): the Sinaloa Cartel (CDS), Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), Northeast Cartel (CDN), The New Michoacán Family (LNFM), Gulf Cartel (CDG), United Cartels (CU), Tren de Aragua (TdA), and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13).

Some of the world's most violent and powerful transnational criminal organizations, who are engaged in activities ranging from drug trafficking, kidnapping, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and weapons trafficking to extortion, bribery, murder, and resource theft, carry these designations. The newly-designated TCOs constitute not only a law enforcement threat but also a national security threat due to their ongoing campaigns of violence and supply of deadly drugs throughout the Western Hemisphere.

*Source: U.S. Department of State, February 2025*

# MEXICAN TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mexican TCOs are among the world's leading producers of illicit drugs, such as fentanyl, methamphetamine, and heroin; they also control the wholesale trafficking of these drugs, and others such as cocaine, into the United States. These TCOs form business relationships with U.S. drug trafficking organizations and violent criminal organizations for the distribution and retail sale of drugs, which drives addiction, overdose deaths, and violence in communities nationwide.

Beyond fueling the drug overdose crisis in the United States, TCOs engage in extreme violence, including murder and intimidation, and hostile takeovers of territory and trafficking routes in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Six powerful Mexican TCOs were designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the Department of State: the Sinaloa Cartel, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, the Gulf Cartel, the Northeast Cartel, the New Michoacán Family, and the United Cartels.

# SINALOA CARTEL (CDS)

## Executive Summary

The Sinaloa Cartel (Cártel de Sinaloa, aka CDS) is one of the world's most powerful drug cartels and one of the largest producers and traffickers of fentanyl and other illicit drugs to the United States (see **Figure 1**). For decades, CDS has smuggled multi-kilogram quantities of illicit fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana into the United States and around the globe. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has identified tens of thousands of CDS members, associates, and facilitators operating worldwide, all working in decentralized networks under the larger CDS umbrella. DEA reporting shows that CDS operates internationally in at least 40 countries, continuously expanding into the lucrative markets of Europe, Asia, and Australia.

On July 25, 2024, the United States arrested Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada-Garcia, a co-founder and leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, and Joaquín Guzmán-López, a founding member of the Sinaloa Cartel's Los Chapitos faction, in New Mexico, just outside of El Paso, Texas. This arrest brought into custody key cartel figures who eluded both U.S. and Mexican law enforcement for years and are considered two of the principal leaders responsible for the production, trafficking, and distribution of fentanyl throughout the United States. The arrest escalated tensions and infighting between the main two factions of the Sinaloa Cartel (Los Mayos and Los Chapitos), which continues today.

## Impact to the United States

CDS is one of the most significant threats to the public health, public safety, and national security of the United States. The cartel uses their vast distribution networks to transport drugs into the United States, primarily through ports of entry (POEs) in California and Arizona. CDS associates, facilitators, and affiliates operate in almost all 50 U.S. states, and these thousands of CDS-linked drug traffickers supply illicit drugs and drive violence across American communities. A web of illicit drug wholesalers one step removed from the cartels in Mexico operate in major cities throughout the United States, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, and Miami. These U.S.-based affiliates use social media platforms and encrypted messaging applications to advertise and distribute their deadly products, as well as to recruit couriers and traffickers. They supply networks of local independent drug trafficking groups, street crews, and gangs whose main aim is to get the illegal drugs into the hands of users. Some gang members and independent traffickers are so prolific they have direct contact with CDS-connected wholesalers, allowing them to become regional-level suppliers.

**Figure 1. Sinaloa Cartel Dominant Areas of Operation**

*Source: DEA*

# Criminal Activity

## ► Illicit Fentanyl and Procurement of Precursor Chemicals

CDS controls and operates extensive, multi-faceted, transnational networks to facilitate the procurement and shipment of precursor chemicals from China and India to synthesize deadly synthetic drugs, including fentanyl, in Mexico-based clandestine laboratories. The cartel uses maritime ports, primarily along the Pacific Coast, to smuggle and import precursor chemicals into CDS-controlled laboratories. These laboratories produce millions of illicit fentanyl pills and thousands of pounds of illicit fentanyl powder every year. Recently, factions of CDS began adding xylazine to batches of fentanyl smuggled into the United States, primarily destined for markets on the East Coast. U.S.-based traffickers also mix xylazine with their fentanyl supply, allowing both groups to stretch fentanyl supplies and generate more revenue.

## ► Methamphetamine

CDS produces multi-ton quantities of exceptionally high-purity and -potency methamphetamine in clandestine laboratories. According to DEA's Special Testing and Research Laboratory, methamphetamine seized and tested has reached the highest purity and potency ever recorded, with average purity levels reaching nearly 97 percent in 2025. The ample supply, low cost, and high potency has enabled the cartel to expand beyond traditional methamphetamine markets in the western United States into new markets in the eastern United States and setting the stage for

more methamphetamine overdose deaths. Globally, CDS leverages the trafficking and supply of methamphetamine and cocaine to flood lucrative drug markets in Asia, Australia, and New Zealand, where profits for methamphetamine can be more than 100 times higher than in the United States.

### ► Other Drugs

CDS has long-standing ties with cocaine producers in South America and has cultivated opium poppy for the production of heroin for generations. The cartel has also become involved in the manufacturing and trafficking of "tusi," a pink-colored drug cocktail consumed mainly in the club scenes of major metropolitan cities in North and South America. Originally a slang term for the synthetic hallucinogenic drug 2C-B, CDS has exploited the branding of tusi to create new mixtures that are combinations of ketamine and other drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and/or fentanyl. CDS is capable of importing large quantities of ketamine from China to facilitate tusi production in Mexico.

## Other Criminal Activities

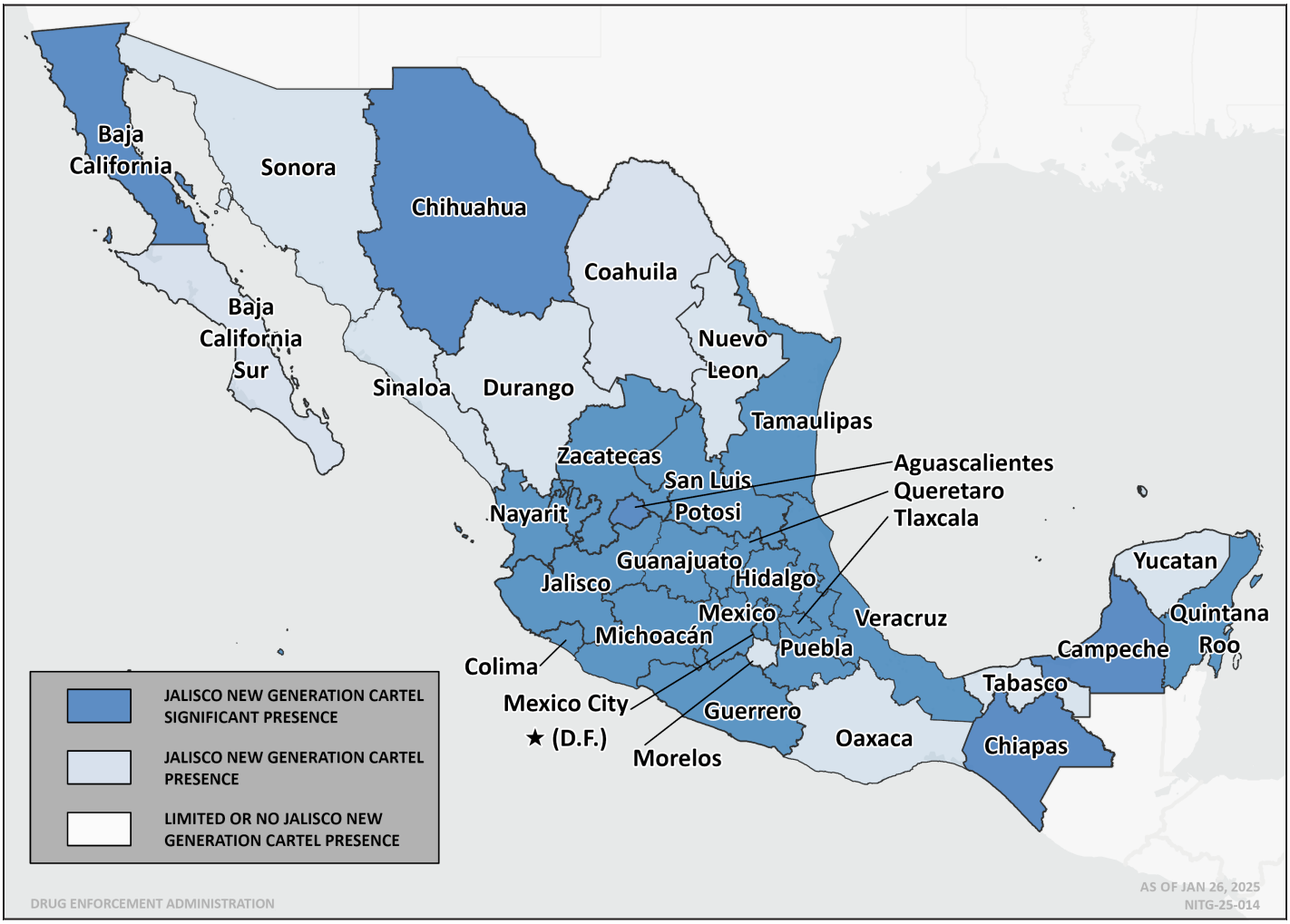
As one of the world's most powerful cartels, CDS engages in a wide range of violent criminal activities to protect their drug operations, spread their illicit influence, and increase revenue. CDS uses actual or threatened violence (e.g., murder, torture, kidnapping) to intimidate civilians, government officials, and journalists. Additionally, CDS engages in many other crimes, including money laundering, extortion, theft of petroleum and natural resources, weapons trafficking, human smuggling, prostitution, and illegal wildlife trade. The illicit proceeds of these peripheral crimes provide resources that make CDS more resilient and increase their ability to expand.

# JALISCO NEW GENERATION CARTEL (CJNG)

## Executive Summary

The Jalisco New Generation Cartel (Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, aka CJNG) is one of Mexico's most powerful, influential, and ruthless transnational criminal organizations and a key supplier of illicit fentanyl to the United States (see **Figure 2**). CJNG has expanded its operations beyond Mexico's borders, establishing a presence in over 40 countries. The cartel uses its vast financial resources, unique franchise-based command structure, proclivity for violence, and access to corrupt officials to maintain and expand its influence over Mexico's illicit drug trade. According to Mexican news sources, CJNG could capitalize on the conflict between the Los Mayos and Los Chapitos factions of the Sinaloa Cartel, essentially by choosing sides in favor of their former rivals, Los Chapitos, against Los Mayos. A strategic alliance between CJNG and Los Chapitos has the potential to expand these groups' territories, resources, firepower, and access to corrupt officials, which could result in a significant disruption to the existing balance of criminal power in Mexico and could serve to increase northbound drug flow and southbound weapons trafficking at the U.S.-Mexico border.

**Figure 2. Jalisco New Generation Cartel Dominant Areas of Operation**




*Source: DEA*

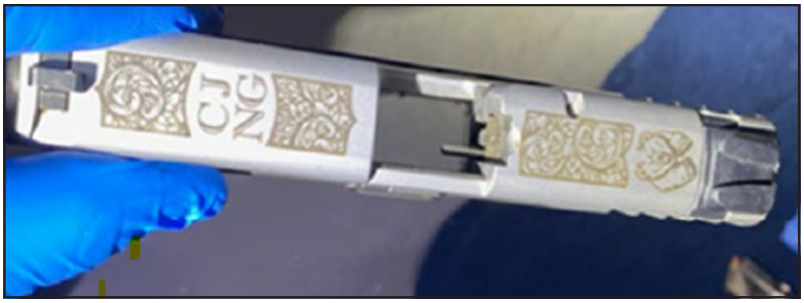
## Impact to the United States

CJNG is one of the most significant threats to the public health, public safety, and national security of the United States. The cartel operates clandestine laboratories in Mexico where they manufacture illicit drugs and then utilize vast distribution networks to transport drugs into the United States. CJNG associates, facilitators, and affiliates operate in almost all 50 U.S. states.

## Criminal Activity

CJNG is heavily involved in the manufacturing, trafficking, and distribution of illicit drugs, such as fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine. While other cartels approach money laundering in differing ways, CJNG's financial arm, Los Cuinis, features prominently in the leadership structure of the cartel. Los Cuinis leads the cartel's diverse network of money laundering operations and tactics to repatriate global illicit drug proceeds back to Mexico. This group and other CJNG factions use CMLNs, cryptocurrency exchanges, bulk cash smuggling, trade-based money laundering, and other methods for laundering illicit drug-related proceeds.

**Figure 3. Seized Pistol with "CJNG" Engraved on the Slide**




*Source: DEA*

## Other Criminal Activity

CJNG is likely increasing its involvement in non-drug activities, to include gasoline theft, extortion schemes, infiltrating legitimate industries, taxing human smuggling, and perpetrating real estate schemes—including timeshare fraud—for money laundering purposes. CJNG members increasingly participate in these activities to diversify revenue streams and protect drug trafficking assets from law enforcement seizure.

# NORTHEAST CARTEL (CDN)

## Executive Summary

The Northeast Cartel (Cártel del Noreste, aka CDN) is a large network of compartmentalized cells responsible for fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana trafficking operations throughout the United States and Mexico (see **Figure 4**). CDN has a dangerous reputation, with members regularly engaging in public acts of violence, including assassination, torture, kidnapping, and intimidation. The cartel is responsible for illicit drug shipments crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in southern Texas before moving the drugs to distribution hubs in San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas-Fort Worth. CDN is also involved in large-scale human smuggling operations into the United States, often kidnapping or exploiting migrants for purposes of extortion or forced labor.

## Impact to the United States

The Los Mayos faction of the Sinaloa Cartel provides CDN with illicit fentanyl, crystal methamphetamine, and cocaine which CDN then smuggles northbound into the United States. The cartel facilitates the sale and distribution of these drugs using routes under control of the Sinaloa Cartel. CDN's preferred concealment methods for smuggling drugs include personally operated vehicles, drug mules, and tractor-trailer cargo. Additionally, CDN exploits the Omnibus de Mexico (OMEX)—a passenger bus company that operates for the specific purposes of transporting passengers between Mexico and the United States—to smuggle drugs into the United States. CDN associates, facilitators, and affiliates operate throughout Texas, Oklahoma, and Georgia, as well as in the upper Midwest.

**Figure 4. Northeast Cartel Dominant Areas of Operation**

*Source: DEA*

## Criminal Activity

CDN is involved in a diverse range of criminal activities, including kidnapping, extortion, vehicle theft, human smuggling, money laundering, prostitution, and armed robbery. The cartel is known to extort money from migrants crossing the Rio Grande River in CDN-controlled areas. Elements of CDN, which largely controls the Ciudad Victoria area in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas abutting the southeast tip of Texas, have been known to use their corrupt influence to attempt to bribe state police officers to protect their drug and human smuggling networks. Additionally, CDN has been setting up cash-intensive businesses in Ciudad Victoria to facilitate the cartel's money laundering activities.

# THE MICHOACÁN FAMILY (LFM)

## Executive Summary

The Michoacán Family (La Familia Michoacána, aka LFM) is an umbrella organization holding territory in the Mexican states of Guerrero, Michoacán, Morelos, and the State of Mexico (see **Figure 5**). LFM formed in 2006 to fight the encroachment of Los Zetas into Michoacán. Since then, LFM has been known for using violence and military-style tactics to fight against other TCOs. LFM

does not currently operate as a large cohesive organization; instead, it exists as a conglomerate of several powerful factions. Factions of LFM traffic methamphetamine, fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin, and maintain control of the Port of Lázaro Cárdenas—one of the largest seaports in Mexico and key for the importation of precursor chemicals from China. Given the distance of LFM's territory from the U.S.-Mexico border, factions of the cartel align themselves with larger organizations to gain access to trafficking routes and POEs at the border. Two significant factions of LFM, the New Michoacán Family and the United Cartels, are among the TCOs designated as FTOs by the U.S. Department of State.

## Impact to the United States

LFM associates, facilitators, and affiliates – or those of its "sister" groups, the New Michoacán Family and the United Cartels – operate in about one-third of U.S. states, primarily from Texas northward to the upper Midwest, along the eastern seaboard from Florida to New York, and in California and Oregon.

**Figure 5. The Michoacán Family Dominant Areas of Operation**

*Source: DEA*

# NEW MICHOACÁN FAMILY (LNFM)

## Executive Summary

The New Michoacán Family (La Nueva Familia Michoacána, aka LNFM) is the most powerful faction of LFM. LNFM mainly operates in the Mexican states of Guerrero and Michoacán which includes the Port of Lázaro Cárdenas, one of Mexico's largest seaports (see **Figure 6**). The Port of Lázaro Cárdenas is often contested by CJNG due to its strategic importance as a point of importation for precursor chemicals sourced from China and cocaine arriving from Colombia. LNFM is involved in the trafficking of illicit fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin and has made alliances at different times with CJNG, CDS factions, and the Gulf Cartel to gain access to trafficking routes and POEs into the United States.

**Figure 6. The New Michoacán Family Dominant Areas of Operation**

*Source: DEA*

## Impact to the United States

LNFM is responsible for the transportation, importation, and distribution of multi-ton quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin into the United States. LNFM frequently uses tractor-trailer cargo to transport illicit drugs from Mexico into the United States, where they use rental homes in different cities as stash houses. The cartel also operates multiple clandestine methamphetamine laboratories in the state of Guerrero, producing ton-quantities of the drug every month. LNFM

traffics this methamphetamine mostly to the Dallas, Texas area – their primary U.S. market – often concealed in shipments of produce. Although their U.S. base of operations is the Dallas area, LNFM associates, facilitators, and affiliates – or those of its "sister" groups, LFM and the United Cartels – operate in about one-third of U.S. states.

## Criminal Activity

LNFM launders drug proceeds through the black-market peso exchange (BMPE), bulk cash shipments, and wire transfers through various cartel-affiliated money services business (MSBs). LNFM is also involved in money laundering activities in the United States using unsuspecting legitimate businesses. LNFM smuggles weapons across the Guatemala-Mexico border and is also involved in illegal mining and the extortion of mining companies throughout its territories.

# UNITED CARTELS (CU)

## Executive Summary

The United Cartels (Cárteles Unidos, aka CU) is a faction of LFM formed from an alliance of multiple criminal groups to combat CJNG in the state of Michoacán. CU's territory largely overlaps that of LNFM (see **Figure 6**). The main objective of the CU is to maintain its stronghold in the southwestern Michoacán municipality of Tepalcatepec, in the Tierra Caliente region, a strategic drug trafficking route. The current composition of CU includes some independent LFM-associated cells, and other small, regional groups such as Cartel del Abuelo, Los Viagras, the Knights Templar (Los Caballeros Templarios), and the White Trojans (Los Blancos de Troya), although the criminal groups fighting under the CU banner have changed many times over the years.

## Impact to the United States

CU maintains a strong but exclusive presence in Michoacán due to its deep roots in the area. CU's stronghold in Tepalcatepec is a strategically significant drug trafficking route for moving drugs and precursor chemicals out of Acapulco in the state of Guerrero and the Port of Lázaro Cárdenas in Michoacán. Precursor chemicals and drugs arriving in those areas transit north through CU territory in Michoacán before moving on to Guadalajara and eventually the United States, where CU associates, facilitators, and affiliates – or those of its "sister" organizations, LFM and LNFM – operate in approximately one-third of U.S. states.

## Criminal Activity

The ongoing rivalry between CU and CJNG leads to high levels of violence in Michoacán as both sides engage in regular shootouts and displays of military power. This violence has resulted in numerous casualties among civilians, military, and law enforcement. The CU is also known for their extortion of farmers in the Tierra Caliente region. Farmers are threatened with kidnapping or death unless they pay protection money, which sometimes amounts to thousands of dollars per acre. In 2019, U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors were directly threatened in Ziracuaretiro when a CU-affiliated gang robbed the truck the inspectors were traveling in at gunpoint.

# GULF CARTEL (CDG)

## Executive Summary

The Gulf Cartel (Cártel del Golfo, aka CDG) has its roots as traffickers of multi-ton quantities of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana from its stronghold in the state of Tamaulipas into the United States (see **Figure 7**). As of 2025, CDG is no longer a unified cartel, having split into multiple factions. The two most powerful factions are Los Metros and Los Escorpiones. These two factions fight each other for control of trafficking routes and territory—especially the Port of Altamira—as well as for overall control of CDG. The Los Metros faction is aligned with CJNG for protection from Los Mayos, CDN, and other CDG factions. The alliance helps facilitate the uninterrupted flow of drugs from both CJNG and Los Metros into the United States. In exchange, CJNG gains access to POEs on the U.S.-Mexico border as well as to the Port of Altamira, which is used to import precursor chemicals. The Los Escorpiones faction is currently fighting CDN and other factions of CDG for control of the Reynosa, Tamaulipas area, while a third, less prominent faction, Los Ciclones, has recently turned to fighting CDN and Los Metros.

**Figure 7. Gulf Cartel Dominant Areas of Operation**

*Source: DEA*

## Impact to the United States

CDG controls significant drug trafficking routes into the Rio Grande Valley area of Texas, transporting illicit fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. The Los Metros faction has effectively become an enforcement arm of CJNG in northeastern Mexico and assists in protecting and transporting CJNG-owned shipments across the border. In addition, Los Metros traffics cocaine acquired from Colombia and methamphetamine sourced from LNFM across the U.S.-Mexico border, usually in tractor-trailer cargo. CDG associates, facilitators, and affiliates operate in approximately 16 U.S. states, primarily Texas, Oklahoma, California, and the southeastern United States, but also in the upper Midwest, Nebraska, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.

## Criminal Activity

CDG is primarily a drug- and human-smuggling cartel, moving migrants and shipments of fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin into South Texas. CDG generates significant revenue from its migrant-smuggling operations, augmenting their illicit drug proceeds. Much of their money is smuggled back to Mexico in bulk cash, but they also launder money via money exchange businesses throughout the Brownsville, Texas area.

### Operation Top Fuel (Liquid Death)

Multiple federal and state law enforcement and regulatory agencies are jointly targeting a Mexican TCO (now designated as an FTO) involved in smuggling methamphetamine, heroin, and black-market oil and gas across the Texas/Mexico border. The investigation has identified multiple cartel leaders who have significant ties to CJNG, CDS, LFM, and CDG. This investigation has discovered that the TCOs are obtaining or stealing, then smuggling, Mexican PEMEX (Petróleos Mexicanos, Mexico's state-owned petroleum corporation) crude oil into the United States for sale to U.S. oil and gas companies, in a sophisticated trade-based money laundering scheme. The investigation has determined that this black-market petroleum smuggling operation is the primary means by which the TCO funds its networks. It is estimated that Mexico is losing tens of billions in tax revenue annually, while simultaneously costing the U.S. oil and gas companies billions of dollars annually due to a decline in petroleum imports and exports during this same period. As a first step in this investigation, on September 10, 2024, the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, in coordination with DEA, sanctioned nine Mexican subjects and 26 entities involved in fuel theft, including a regional leader and founding member of CJNG. This designation was the first major step in disrupting one of the largest funding sources utilized by drug cartels. The focus will now shift to U.S. companies and members involved in facilitating this illicit Mexican petroleum smuggling operation.

# OTHER VIOLENT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

The U.S. State Department designated the violent TCOs Tren de Aragua (TdA) and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) as FTOs. Members of these groups sell illicit drugs at the street level, commit violent crimes, and actively recruit both U.S. citizens and undocumented migrants from South and Central America into their organizations.

## TREN DE ARAGUA (TDA)

### Executive Summary

Tren de Aragua (aka TdA) is a violent criminal organization founded between 2012 and 2013 in Aragua, a state in north-central Venezuela. The group originally gained power and influence as a prison gang inside the Tocorón prison in Venezuela under the leadership of its founder, and current fugitive, Héctor Rusthenford "Niño" Guerrero Flores. In the United States, TdA mainly operates within Venezuelan migrant communities. TdA facilitates the smuggling of thousands of Venezuelan migrants into the United States and then extorts the migrants, forcing them into prostitution or other crimes to pay off their smuggling debts. TdA members routinely commit assault, robbery, and murder as part of carrying out these extortion rackets. TdA members also conduct small-scale drug trafficking activities such as the distribution of tusi. In some areas of the United States, TdA members work for larger criminal organizations, conducting murder-for-hire and working as drug couriers, stash house guards, and street level drug distributors.

TdA members are suspected and/or charged with a variety of crimes including drug trafficking, murder, kidnapping, extortion, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, prostitution, organized retail crime, robberies, and document fraud. TdA conducts human trafficking operations designed to smuggle primarily Venezuelan migrants through Central America and Mexico into the United States. In cities with large Venezuelan populations, TdA members operate violent extortion rackets resulting in assault, murder, and arson. TdA members also engage in organized retail theft, burglary, and street robbery operations that frequently result in violence. Firearms stolen by TdA robbery gangs are routinely distributed to other TdA members to further violent crime. TdA drug trafficking activity occurs mainly at the street level and involves the distribution and sale of tusi in specific regional markets.

## MARA SALVATRUCHA (MS-13)

### Executive Summary

Mara Salvatrucha, better known as MS-13, is an extremely violent international criminal gang founded in Los Angeles, California in the 1980s by El Salvadoran immigrants. The gang is well-established in the United States, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and its numbers have grown to include thousands of members in almost all 50 U.S. states. The brutality and extremity

of their violent crimes have garnered significant law enforcement and media attention. MS-13 members also engage in retail-level drug trafficking, robbery, prostitution, extortion, firearms offenses, and other crimes.

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# FENTANYL

## Overview

Illicit opioids, particularly illicitly manufactured fentanyl, remain the primary drivers behind the ongoing epidemic of drug overdose deaths in the United States.

Fentanyl is increasingly being mixed with other illicit drugs, such as heroin and cocaine. Users may take these drugs without the knowledge that they contain fentanyl, which greatly increases the risk of poisoning. Fake pharmaceutical pills containing fentanyl present an additional danger. Many of these fake pills are manufactured to resemble licit prescription pills, such as oxycodone M30 pills (see **Figure 8**). The fentanyl content in these fake pills is only revealed after laboratory analysis, and the fake pills are nearly identical to legitimate pharmaceuticals.

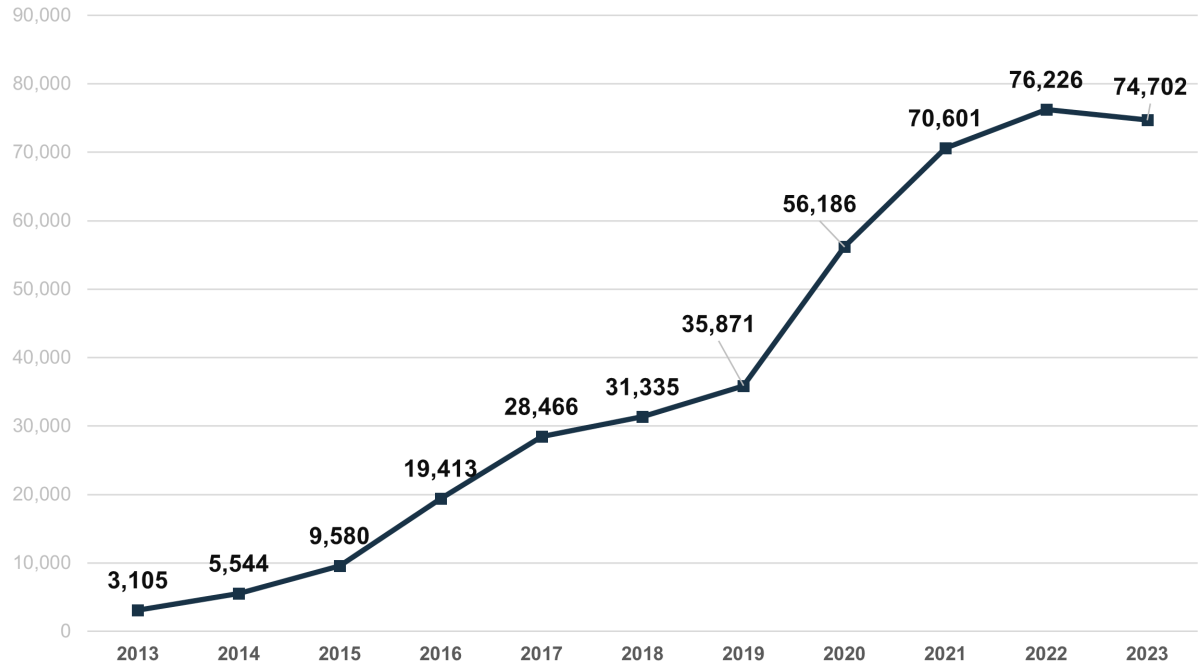
**Figure 8. Fake M30 pills Containing Fentanyl (left) and Fentanyl Bricks (right)**

*Source: DEA*

## Overdose deaths have decreased but remain at dangerously high levels.

Provisional data from CDC indicated that 74,702 of the 107,543 total drug overdose deaths in 2023 (69 percent) involved synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl (see **Figure 9**). According to the most recent available CDC provisional data, in the 12-month period ending in October 2024, the United States recorded 52,385 overdose deaths from synthetic opioids – a 33 percent decline – while overall overdose deaths, from any drug, declined approximately 26 percent.

**Figure 9. Synthetic Opioid Deaths, 2013-2023**

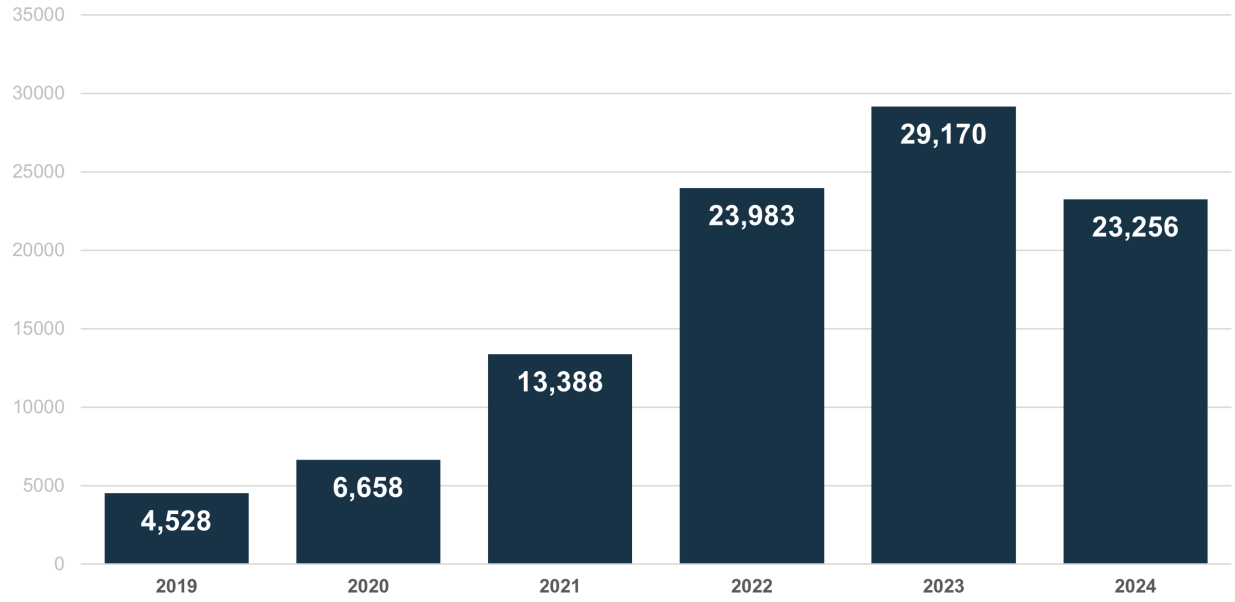



*Source: Centers for Disease Control*

## Seizures

In 2024, DEA seized 9,950 kilograms of fentanyl, approximately 29 percent less than in 2023. DEA also seized 61.1 million fake pills in 2024, a 24 percent decrease from the previous year. Data from the El Paso Intelligence Center's (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS), which consolidates drug seizure data from federal, state, and local agencies throughout the United States, indicated a similar trend, with 23,256 total kilograms seized in 2024, decreasing from the previous year (see **Figure 10**).

**Figure 10. Fentanyl Seizures, in kilograms, 2019-2024**

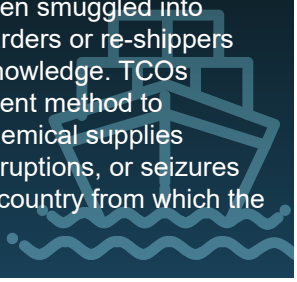



*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

# Mexican TCOs have cemented their role in supplying fentanyl to the United States as the number of fatal overdoses involving illicit opioids remains high.

Mexican TCOs maintain a complex and robust network to smuggle all major illicit drugs into the United States, using a wide variety of methods to include air cargo, maritime cargo, and overland traffic. The cartels maintain a network of couriers, border tunnels, and stash houses throughout Mexico and the United States to support their trafficking and distribution activities. Mexican TCOs have increasingly employed social media platforms to promote drug products, recruit and train couriers and dealers, advertise the sale of drugs, communicate with customers, and plan transactions.

Chemical shipments can arrive first in the United States or Canada in mislabeled packages, which are then smuggled into Mexico by freight forwarders or re-shippers without the shippers' knowledge. TCOs employ this transshipment method to safeguard precursor chemical supplies against regulations, disruptions, or seizures as well as to mask the country from which the chemicals originate.



Mexican TCOs and China-based suppliers rely on sophisticated shipping methods and multi-step processes to evade detection and national/international regulatory controls on chemicals. They employ a series of international export brokers, consignees, facilitators (such as transshipment companies/freight forwarders), and financiers to work within multiple facets of the fentanyl precursor supply chain. Trafficking methods and processes include mislabeling cargo on shipment manifests, using third-party countries as transshipment points, and exploiting legitimate companies to import chemicals for later diversion. Mexican TCOs may expand their precursor chemical supply chains to include manufacturers in India, Europe, and elsewhere to decrease their reliance on Chinese suppliers.



### Fentanyl "Super Laboratories" in Canada

In addition to the synthetic drug threat from Mexico, elevated synthetic drug production in Canada—particularly from sophisticated fentanyl "super laboratories" such as the type seized by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in October 2024—presents a growing concern for the United States. Currently, estimated flows of fentanyl from Canada are substantially lower than flows from Mexico. As of Spring 2025, 22.7 kilograms of Canada-sourced fentanyl were seized at the U.S.-Canada border in 2024, compared to 9,354 kilograms seized at the U.S.-Mexico border. Nevertheless, these operations have the potential to expand and fill any supply void created by disruptions to Mexico-sourced fentanyl production and trafficking.

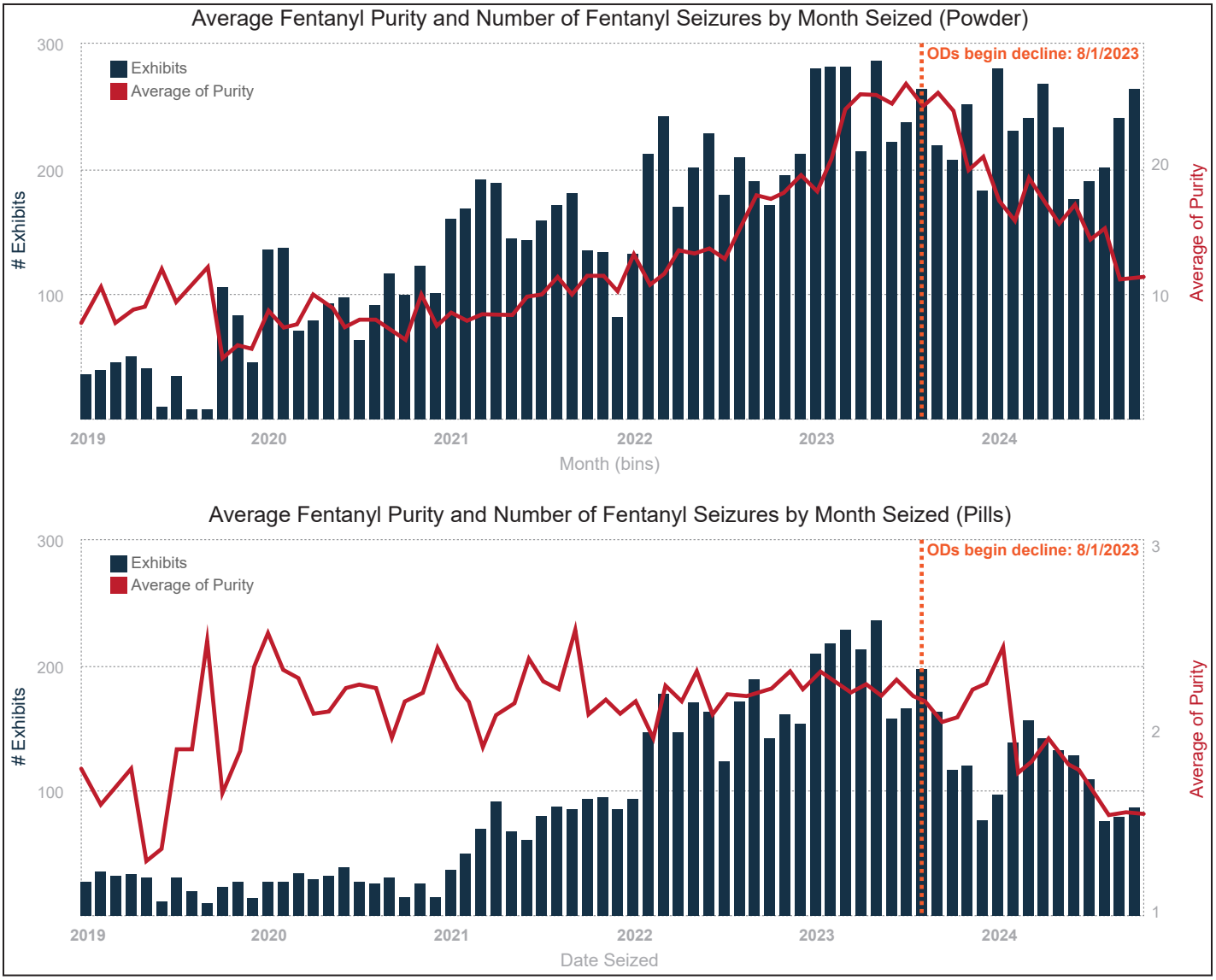
## DEA's Fentanyl Profiling Program

According to the DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory, in 2024, the average fentanyl pill contained 1.94 milligrams (mg) of fentanyl, ranging from a low of 1.58 mg to a high of 2.18 mg. Based on these analyses, DEA forensic laboratory results concluded that approximately 5 out of 10 fake pills contain 2mg or more of fentanyl[b]. The average purity of fentanyl powder samples was 11.36 percent, ranging from exhibits that contained almost no fentanyl (0.07 percent) to exhibits with an astounding 82 percent purity (see **Figure 11**).

DEA's Fentanyl Profiling Program performs in-depth chemical analyses of fentanyl and fentanyl-related exhibits obtained from seizures made throughout the United States, providing a snapshot of samples submitted to the DEA laboratory system.

*b. Approximately 2mg of pure fentanyl is considered a lethal dose, depending on users' opiate tolerance.*

**Figure 11. Average Fentanyl Purity and Number of Exhibits, Powder (top) and Pills (bottom), 2019-2024**




*Source: DEA*

Fentanyl purity declined throughout 2024, consistent with indicators that many Mexico-based fentanyl cooks are having difficulty obtaining some key precursor chemicals. DEA reporting indicates that some China-based chemical suppliers are wary of supplying controlled precursors to its international customers, demonstrating an awareness on their part that the government of China is controlling more fentanyl precursors to comply with recent updates to the United Nations counter-narcotics treaty. The downward trend in fentanyl purity does not mean that street-level fentanyl is less dangerous. Drug dealers in the United States continue to adulterate fentanyl with various animal tranquilizers (such as xylazine), anesthetics (such as ketamine), and other synthetic opioids (such as nitazenes).

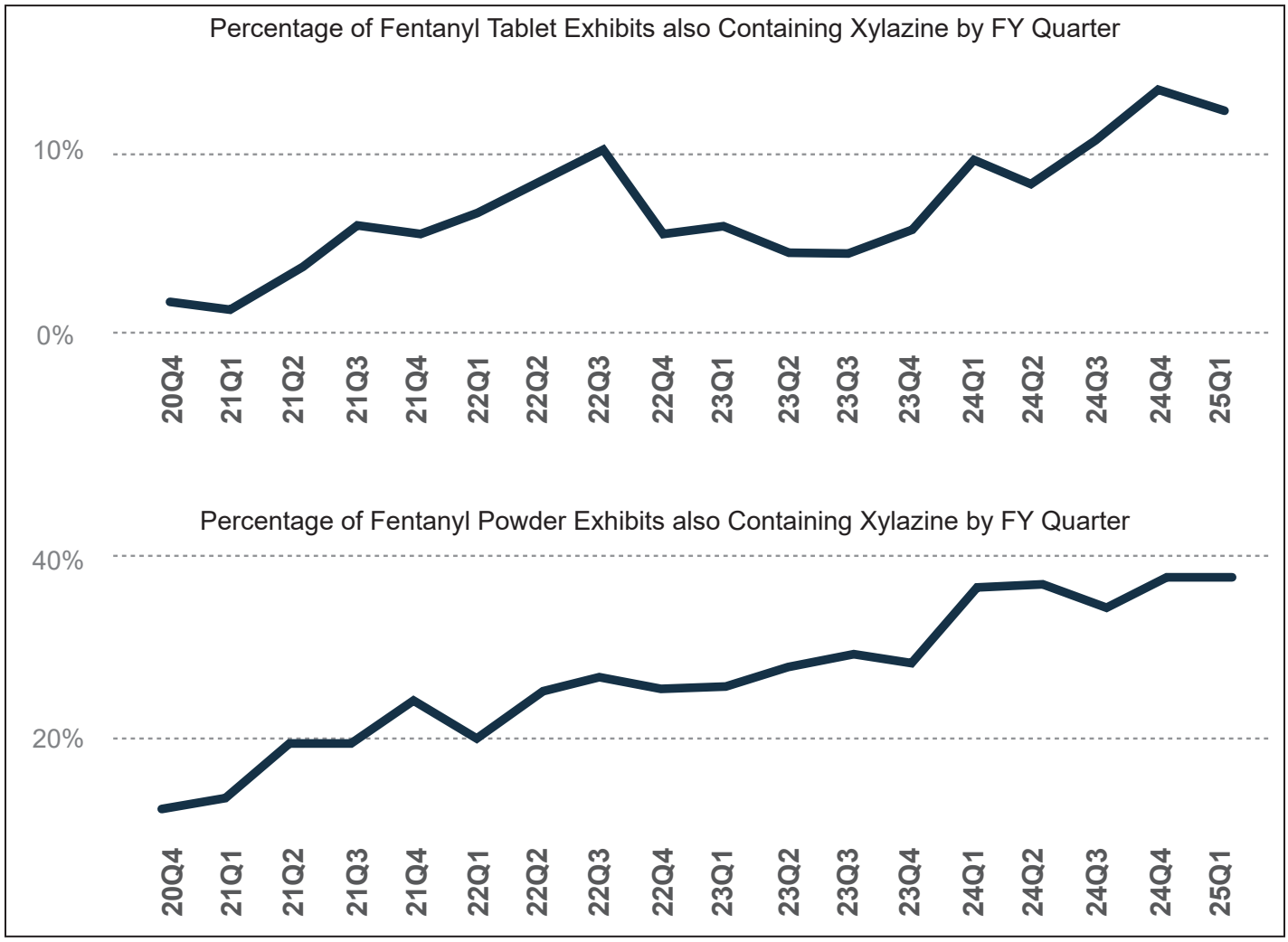
The China-based chemical supply companies and their complicit intermediaries, known as "brokers," currently providing fentanyl precursors to Mexican TCOs are also likely monitoring chemical regulations in countries where they might receive or transship precursor chemical shipments. To mitigate risk, chemical suppliers are advertising and shipping an ever-diversifying array of "designer" fentanyl precursors that, arguably, are exempt from mounting regulations

enacted by the United Nations and individual countries to control precursor chemicals, since many of the designer precursors have legitimate purposes in industrial applications and consumer products. In addition to their ambiguous legal status, these designer precursors may also carry additional molecular groups that make the underlying chemical extremely difficult to detect.

## Xylazine remains a popular adulterant for powder, while acetaminophen is more prevalent in pills.

Reporting and analysis from the DEA forensic laboratory system indicates that xylazine is increasingly present in fentanyl samples and is spreading outside traditional markets in the northeastern United States where it has been prevalent for many years. The percentage of powder fentanyl and fake fentanyl pills containing xylazine has risen steadily since 2020 but is found in far more powder exhibits than in pills (see **Figure 12**). Fake fentanyl pills more commonly contain acetaminophen, a common over-the-counter pain reliever (see **Figure 13**).

**Figure 12. Percentage of Fentanyl Pills (top) and Powder (bottom) Containing Xylazine, 2020-2024**




*Source: DEA*

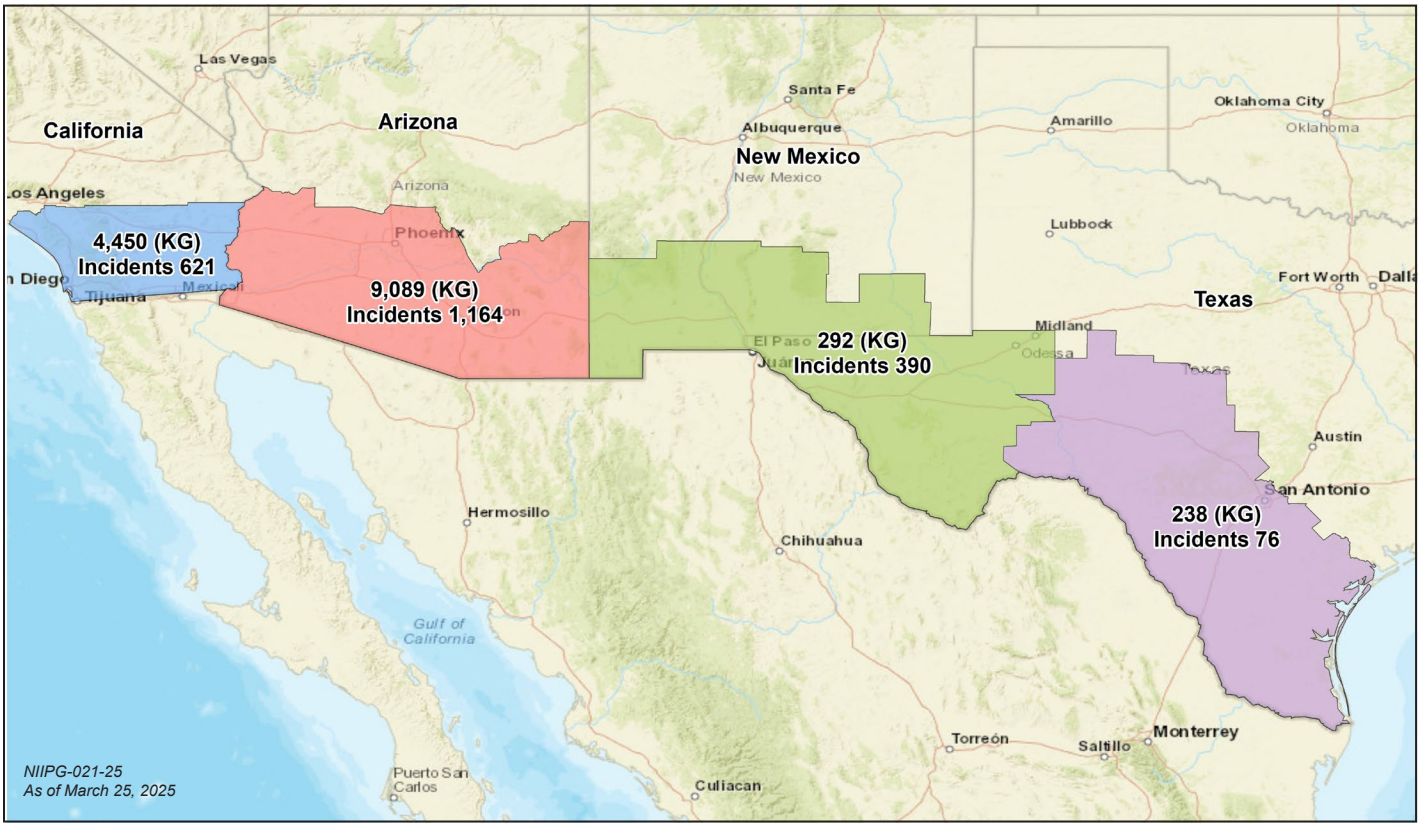
## Figure 13. Top 10 Fentanyl Adulterants

| United States: NFLIS Reported Top Ten Drugs Mixed with Fentanyl | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Rank** | **2019** | **2024*** |
| 1 | Heroin | Xylazine |
| 2 | Acetyl fentanyl | Heroin |
| 3 | 4-ANPP | Acetaminophen |
| 4 | Cocaine | para-Fluorofentanyl |
| 5 | Tramadol | 4-ANPP |
| 6 | Methamphetamine | Fluorofentanyl |
| 7 | Caffeine | Cocaine |
| 8 | Acetaminophen | Methamphetamine |
| 9 | Xylazine | Caffeine |
| 10 | Valeryl fentanyl | Medetomidine |
| **Total** | **172** | **239** |

**2024 data is preliminary and subject to change*
*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10, 2025*

Mexican TCOs dominate fentanyl transportation into and through the United States, with the Southwest Border (SWB) as the main entry point for fentanyl entering the United States, and later rely on U.S.-based criminal groups for distribution. According to NSS reporting, U.S. law enforcement seized a total of 14,069 kilograms of fentanyl at the SWB in 2024, the majority at the Arizona-Mexico border (see **Figure 14**).

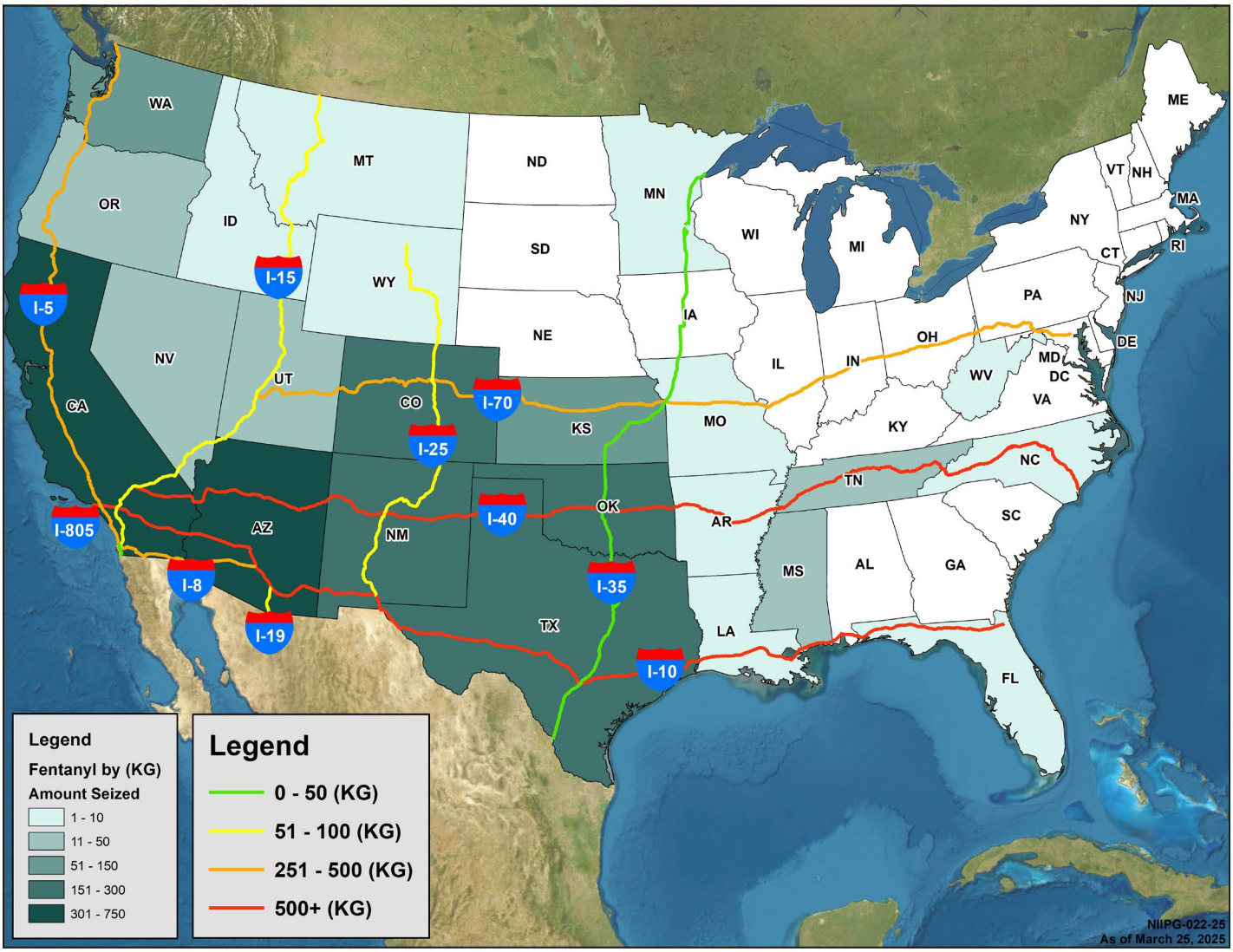
## Figure 14. Fentanyl Seizures at the Southwest Border, by State, 2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

Once across the border, criminal groups use the U.S. Interstate Highway System for further distribution and delivery. Approximately 2,300 kilograms of fentanyl were seized on the ten most heavily traveled U.S. Interstates in 2024 according to NSS data (see **Figure 15**).

**Figure 15. Fentanyl Seizures along the 10 Most-Traveled U.S. Interstates, by weight, 2024**



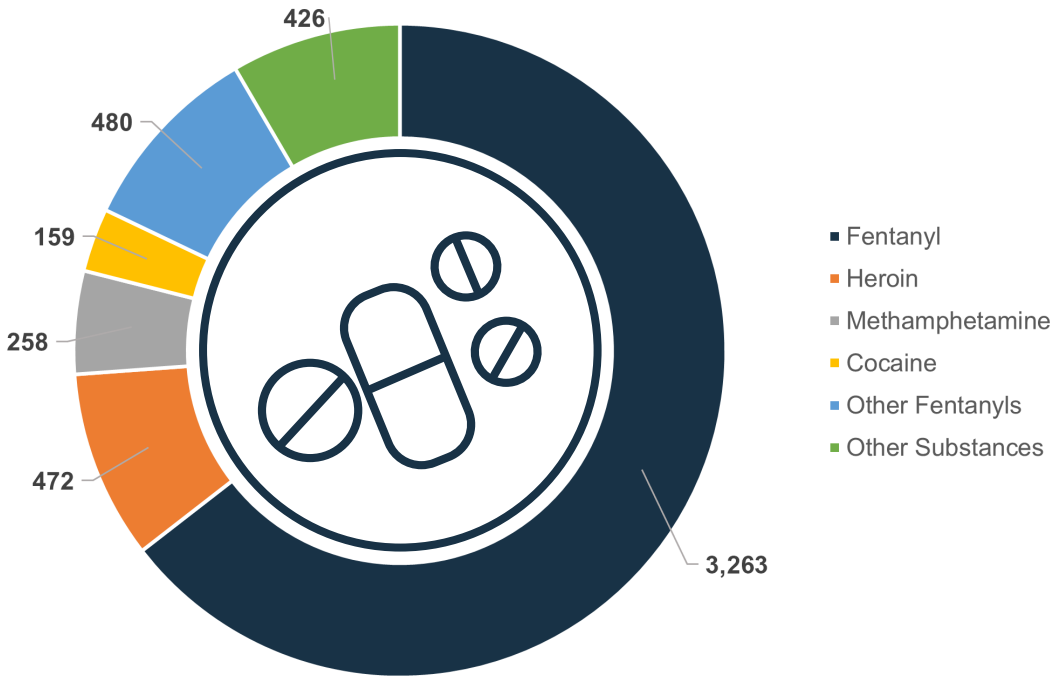

*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

## Fentanyl Cocktails (Co-Reported Drugs) Found in All Top Street Drugs

Heightening the challenges already associated with the fight against the fentanyl crisis is the increased mixing of fentanyl with other drugs. Many users and dealers simply do not know the exact makeup of what they are consuming or selling. Drug cocktails have become the new normal rather than the exception, and these drug mixtures are undetectable without laboratory analysis. According to data from the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS), approximately one in four cocaine submissions and one in eight methamphetamine submissions revealed fentanyl content after laboratory analysis. Drug mixing occurs throughout the supply stream, from production in Mexico to street level distribution in the United States, but most mixtures are probably created at the distribution level because local traffickers know their users' preferences in a particular area.

While many samples and exhibits may be found to contain more than one substance during laboratory analysis, just over 10 percent of exhibits are submitted as known polydrug mixtures. According to DEA forensic analysis, of the 5,058 exhibits submitted as known polydrug mixtures, 75 percent contained fentanyl or a fentanyl-related substance as the primary substance[c] (see **Figure 16**).

**Figure 16. Polydrug Exhibits by Primary Substance, 2024**




*Source: DEA*

Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid that is 10,000 times more potent than morphine. It is the most potent commercially-available opioid, and is mainly used as a tranquilizing agent by veterinarians in licensed professional zoos and other large wildlife environments for elephants and other large mammals. Illicit carfentanil appears sporadically in the U.S. illicit drug market and, when encountered, is usually part of a polydrug mixture where it makes up a very small percentage of the total mixture. These events present as sudden spikes in overdose incidents and seizure surges in specific areas, followed by drop-offs to near zero. Over 100,000 fake M-30 pills containing carfentanil were seized in the Los Angeles area, in February 2025.

*Source: DEA*



c. *"Primary substance" is defined as the most abundant controlled substance in an analyzed sample.*

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# NITAZENES

## Overview

Nitazenes are synthetic opioids similar to fentanyl but can match or surpass the potency of fentanyl. They were first developed in the 1950s for pharmaceutical research and were never approved for use in the United States or any other country. Many nitazenes are listed under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) of the United States, and three – isotonitazene, metonitazene, and protonitazene – have also been placed under international control. According to NFLIS, the top five nitazenes encountered by law enforcement in 2024 were metonitazene, protonitazene, n-pyrrolidino etonitazene, n-desethyl isotonitazene, and isotonitazene (see **Figure 17**). To reduce accidental drug poisonings and deaths, some U.S. states are pursuing legislation or executive orders to control additional nitazenes at the state level.

**Figure 17. N-pyrrolidino Protonitazene**

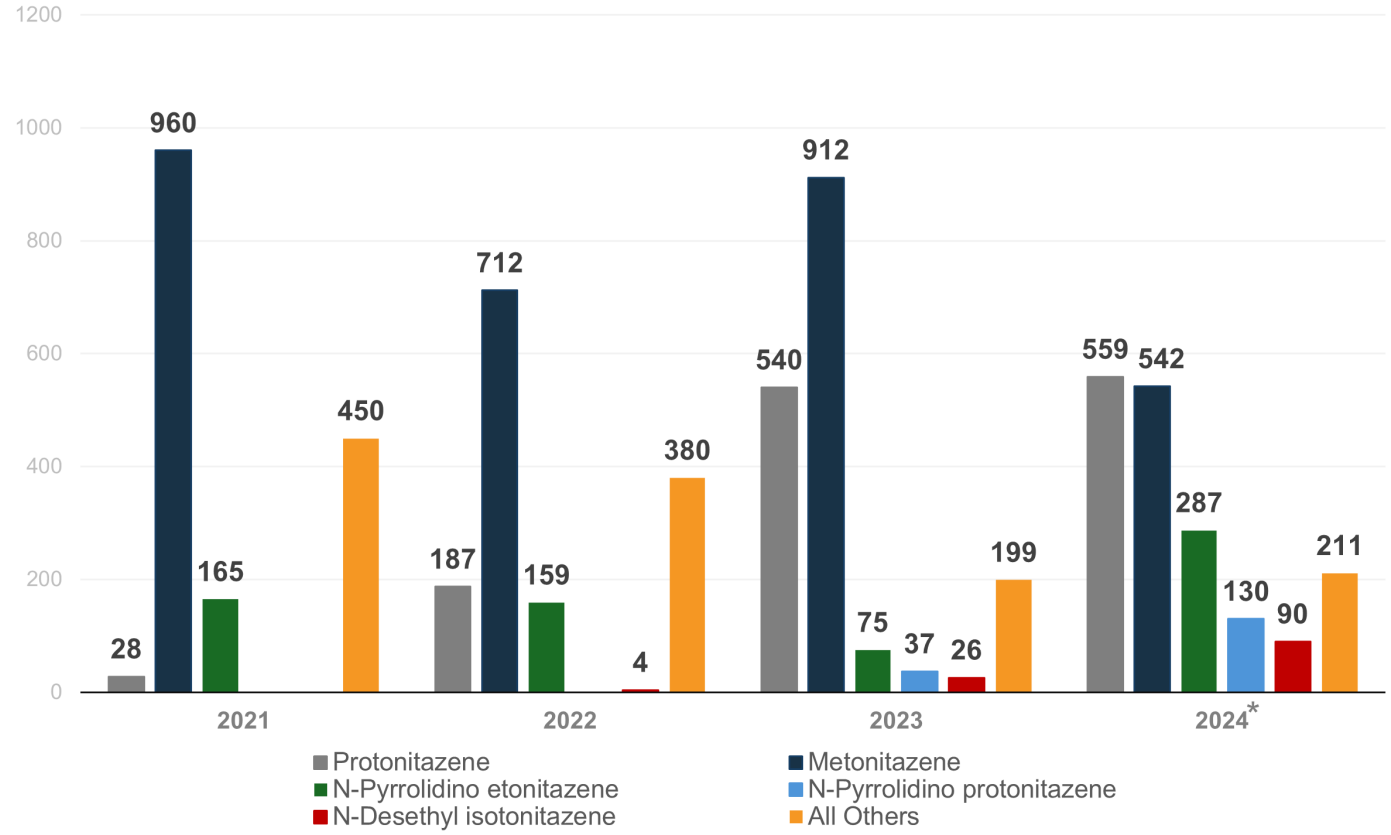
*Source: DEA*

Chemical suppliers, mainly located in China, introduce new nitazenes when the ones currently on the market become riskier to produce due to regulatory actions and drug scheduling, or as users seek novel opioids that are not yet illegal. NFLIS has identified encounters with 17 different nitazenes across the United States to date; methylenedioxynitazene and n-desethyl protonitazene were newly detected in drug samples as of 2024 (see **Figure 18**).

Since 2019, different nitazenes have been seen in tablet form that appear to be legitimate, like M-30 pills. In both powder and pill form, nitazenes have been encountered in polydrug mixtures containing fentanyl, heroin, and/or cocaine; when combined with other drugs, the effects of each drug are exaggerated, significantly increasing the risk of an overdose and addiction. The presence of nitazenes, alone or in polydrug mixtures, highlights the threat nitazenes pose to users in an already-dangerous synthetic opioid market.

## Figure 18. Nitazenes Detected in Drug Exhibits, 2021-2024

NFLIS Encounters With Nitazenes, 2021-2024




**2024 data is preliminary and subject to change*

*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10,2025*

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# XYLAZINE

## Overview

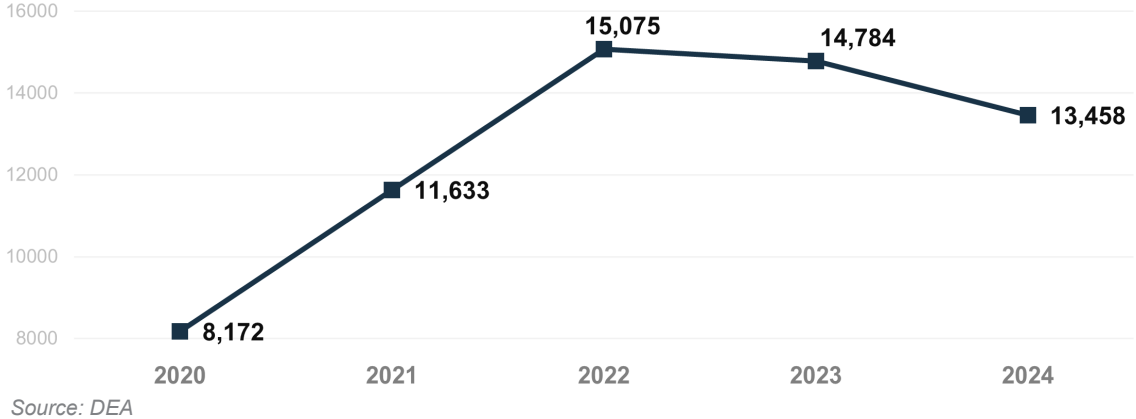
Xylazine is a non-opiate sedative, analgesic, and muscle relaxant approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for veterinary use only, but it is found in U.S. illicit drug markets with increasing frequency (see **Figure 19**). Law enforcement mainly encounters xylazine in mixtures with fentanyl or other opioids, like heroin, but it has also been seen alone and in mixtures with cocaine and other drugs. Xylazine is added to fentanyl by street-level drug traffickers – a mixture known as "tranq" – increasing the risk of death from fentanyl poisoning. Because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone does not reverse its effects. *[Note: Emergency medical experts always recommend administering naloxone if someone might be suffering from a drug poisoning.]* People who inject drug mixtures containing xylazine can develop severe infections, including necrosis (soft tissue death), which can lead to amputations.

**Figure 19. Vials of Veterinary-Use Xylazine**

*Source: DEA*

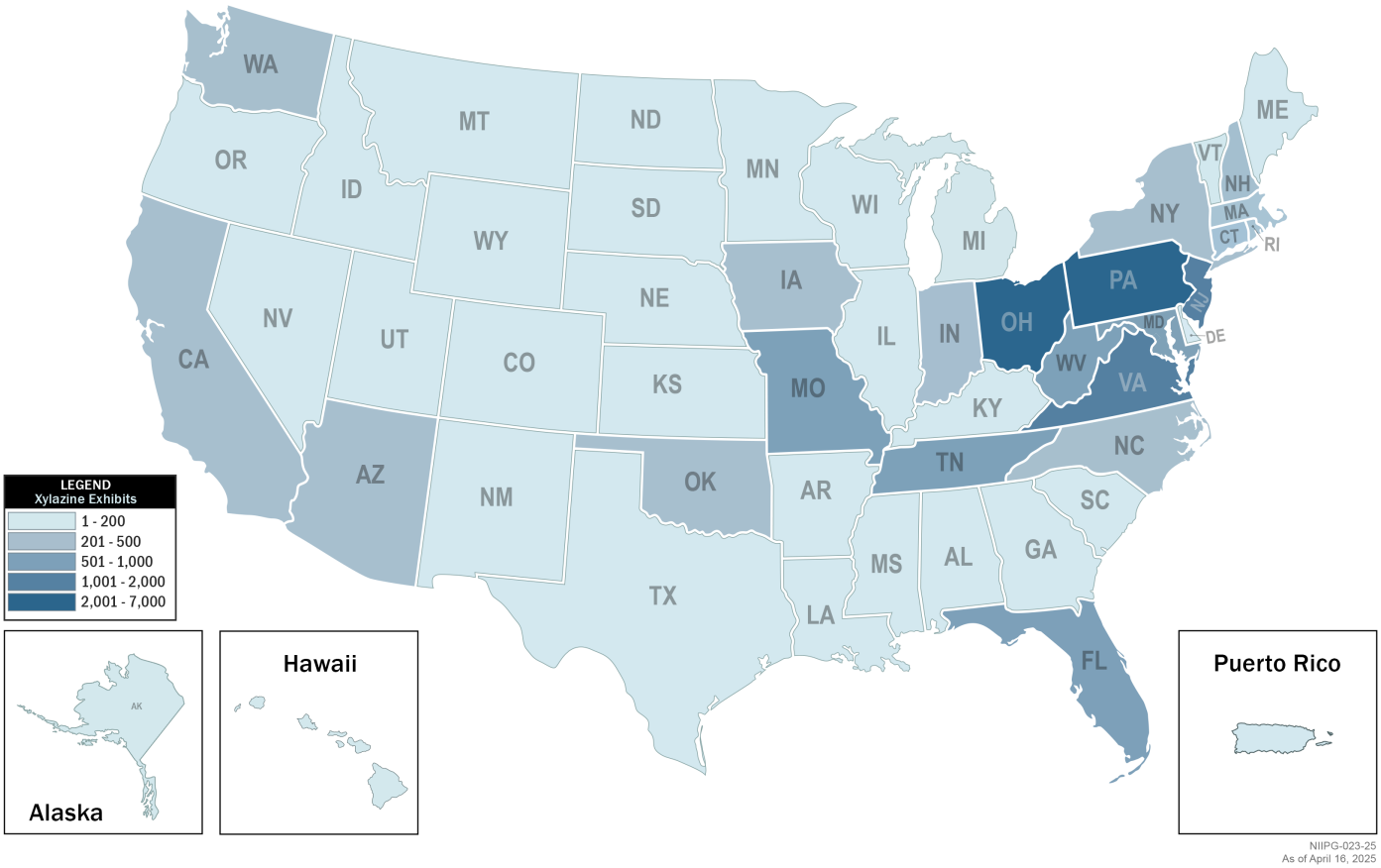
DEA forensic laboratories report that the number of heroin and fentanyl exhibits adulterated with xylazine is increasing and spreading outside traditional white powder heroin and fentanyl markets in the eastern United States, where xylazine has been present for several years (see **Figure 20**). Xylazine is most prevalent in drug samples seized in New Jersey, Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Florida, but has been identified in seized drug samples in every U.S. state, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico (see **Figure 21**).

**Figure 20. Number of Fentanyl Exhibits Containing Xylazine**

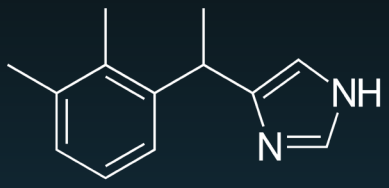



*Source: DEA*

## Figure 21. States with Reported Seizures of Xylazine, 2024




*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 16, 2025*




Medetomidine, referred to as "**rhino tranq**," is a veterinary anesthetic drug with potent sedative effects, increasingly being found mixed with fentanyl and xylazine, which further exacerbates the opioid crisis. Medetomidine's potency is 200-300 times greater than that of xylazine and makes opioid overdoses more difficult to reverse with naloxone. According to DEA Office of Forensic Sciences, xylazine remains the number one adulterant found in fentanyl powder, but the emergence of medetomidine is a dangerous development.

NDC 015914-005-01
Medetomidine Hydrochloride
(medetomidine hydrochloride)
Sterile Injectable Solution
1.0 mg/mL
Sedative & Analgesic
For use in dogs only
Net contents: 10 mL
Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.
ANADA 200-610
Approved by FDA

*Source: Open Source*

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# HEROIN

## Overview

The prevalence of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids in the U.S. illicit drug market amplifies the downward trend in plant-based opiates such as heroin. Mexico-based cartels supply most of the heroin destined for the United States, the majority of which is smuggled through the SWB (see **Figure 22**). From a production standpoint, fentanyl possesses several distinct advantages for these cartels that heroin does not: fentanyl is less expensive and time-consuming to produce; clandestine fentanyl laboratories are not affected by weather or agricultural hazards; and fentanyl can be produced both quickly and year-round. The steady displacement of heroin by fentanyl is illustrated by the persistent decline in heroin seized by DEA since 2020 (see **Figure 23**).

**Figure 22. Different Forms of Heroin – Brown Powder (left), White Powder (center), and Black Tar (right)**

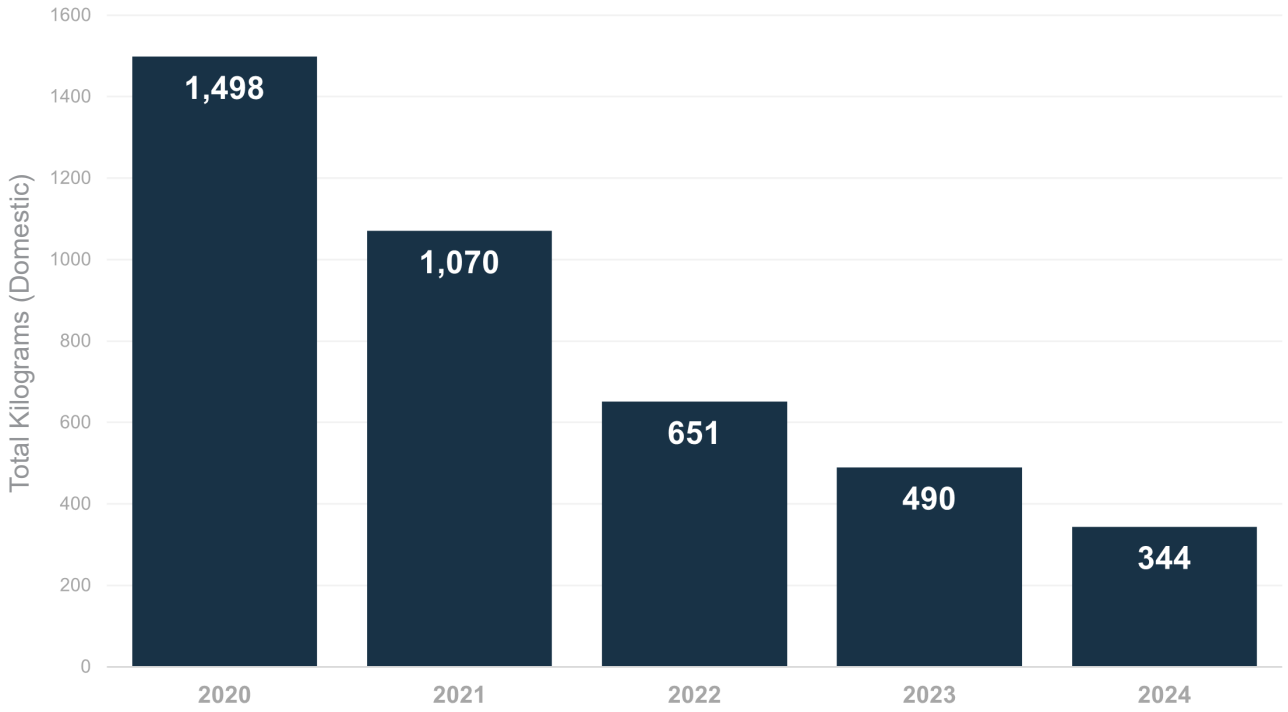
*Source: DEA*

According to the most recent provisional data available from CDC, the United States recorded 2,847 heroin-related deaths in the 12-month period ending in October 2024, an approximately 37 percent decline since the same period last year.

Fentanyl remains drug dealers' adulterant of choice for heroin. The mixing of fentanyl and heroin is so commonplace that both heroin users and forensic drug-testing laboratories say it is difficult to find heroin unadulterated with fentanyl. DEA laboratory reporting on drug samples containing both fentanyl and heroin demonstrates how this trend has evolved. Five years ago, heroin was the primary drug in 66 percent of opiate exhibits submitted by DEA divisions, compared to 34 percent in which fentanyl was the primary drug. In 2024, heroin was the primary drug in only 27 percent of heroin-fentanyl polydrug samples, while the remaining 73 percent of samples revealed fentanyl was the primary drug (see **Figure 24**). Mortality data reinforces how deadly the combination can be: 82 percent of heroin-related deaths involved fentanyl in 2024, according to provisional CDC reporting.

## Figure 23. DEA Heroin Seizures, 2020-2024

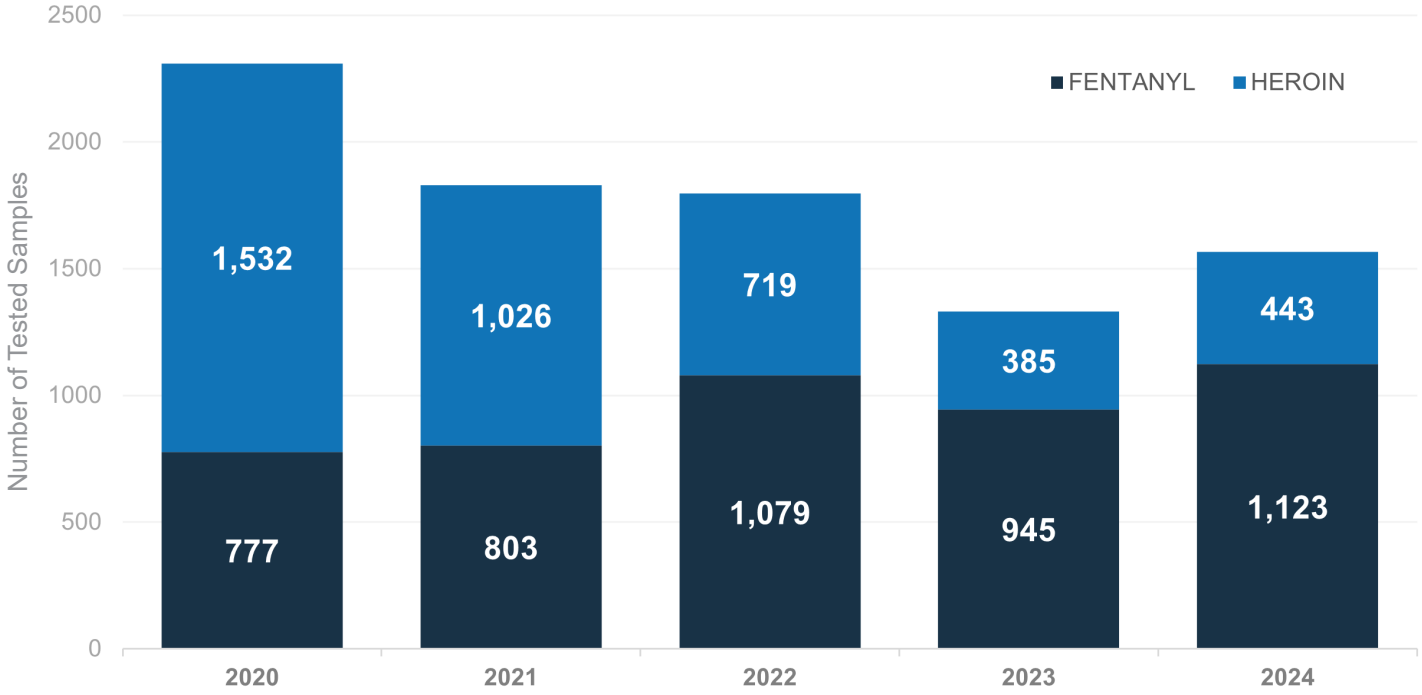
Total (Domestic) Kilograms Seized by Year




*Source: DEA, data retrieved March 18, 2025*

## Figure 24. Poly-drug Seizures Containing Fentanyl and Heroin, 2020-2024

DEA Poly-Drug Seizures Containing Fentanyl and Heroin by Primary Drug Type*, 2020-2024




**Samples contain both heroin and fentanyl where the primary drug was either heroin or fentanyl*
*Source: DEA, data retrieved March 20, 2025*

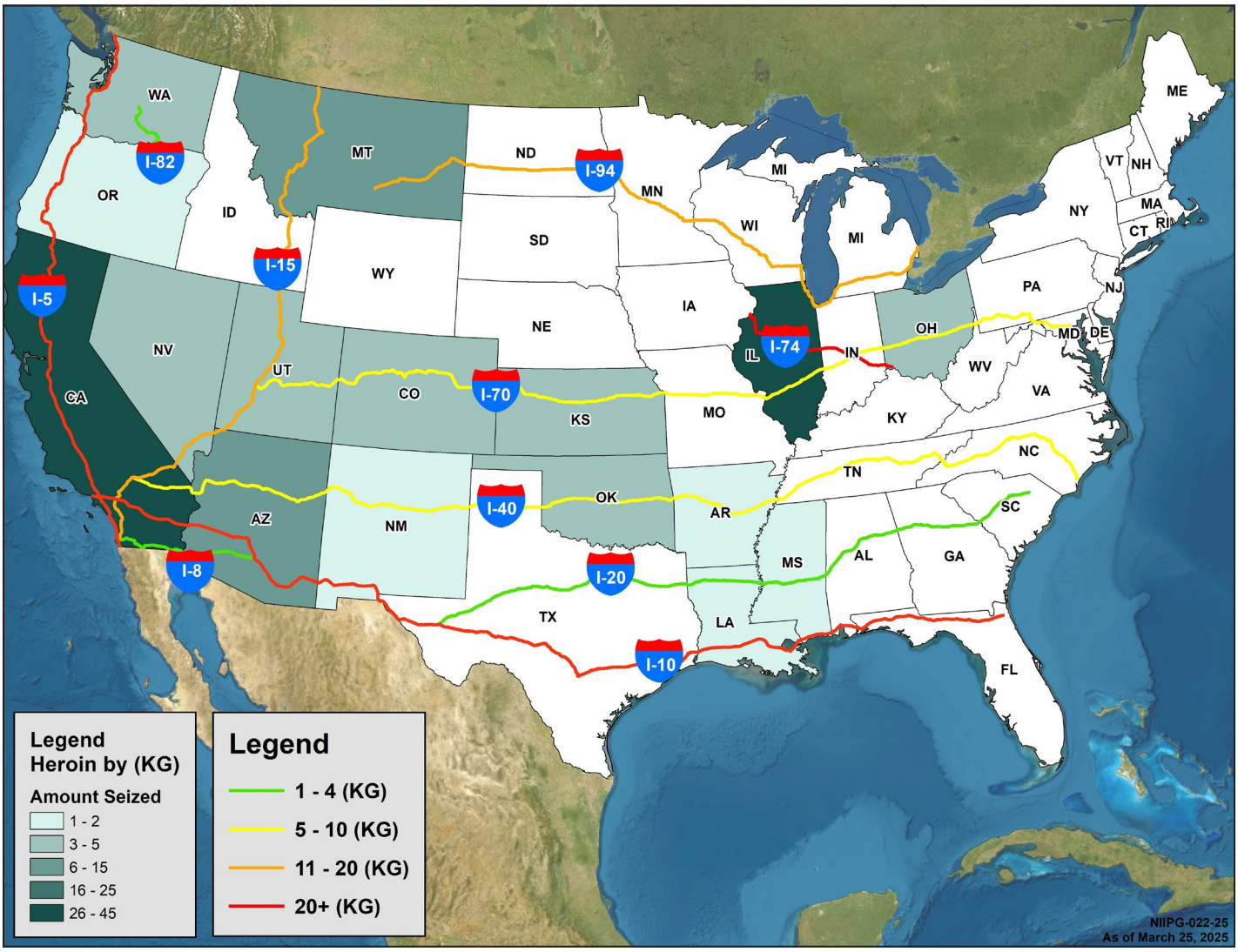
Mexican cartels produce most of the heroin destined for the United States, resulting in the majority of interstate heroin seizures occurring along routes in close proximity to the SWB. As with other drugs, Mexican TCOs control heroin transportation into and through the United States, with the SWB as the main entry point, and later rely on U.S.-based criminal groups for distribution. U.S. law enforcement seized 620 kilograms of heroin at the SWB in 2024, the majority at the California-Mexico border, according to NSS data (see **Figure 25**).

**Figure 25. Heroin Seizures at the Southwest Border, by State, 2024**

*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

Once across the border, criminal groups use the U.S. Interstate Highway System for further distribution and delivery. The NSS further reports that 123 kilograms of heroin were seized on the top ten most heavily traveled U.S. Interstates in 2024 (see **Figure 26**).

## Figure 26. Heroin Seized along the Top 10 Most-Traveled U.S. Interstates, by weight, 2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

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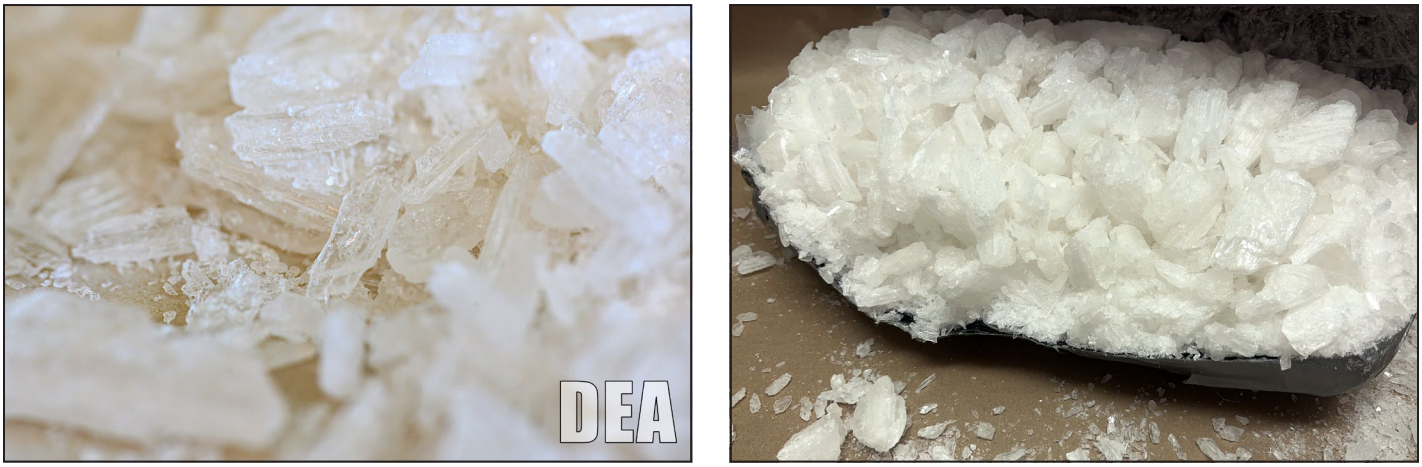
# METHAMPHETAMINE

## Overview

Mexican TCOs remain the primary suppliers of methamphetamine to the United States (see **Figure 27**). They operate large production laboratories throughout Mexico and control lucrative smuggling routes into the United States. China-based companies are the main source of regulated and non-regulated chemicals used in methamphetamine production.

**Figure 27. Crystal Methamphetamine**




*Source: DEA*

According to DEA's Methamphetamine Profiling Program, the majority of the methamphetamine available in the United States is produced in Mexico. The supply of methamphetamine remains high, with Mexican TCOs producing and trafficking a highly pure and potent product. They continue to adapt their production methods as precursor chemicals become restricted, temporarily unavailable, or cost prohibitive.

The SWB remains the main entry point for the majority of methamphetamine entering the United States, and Mexico-based cartels maintain a complex and robust network of facilitators to smuggle methamphetamine into the United States, using a wide variety of methods to transport the drug over the border. Traffickers employ human couriers, commercial flights, parcel

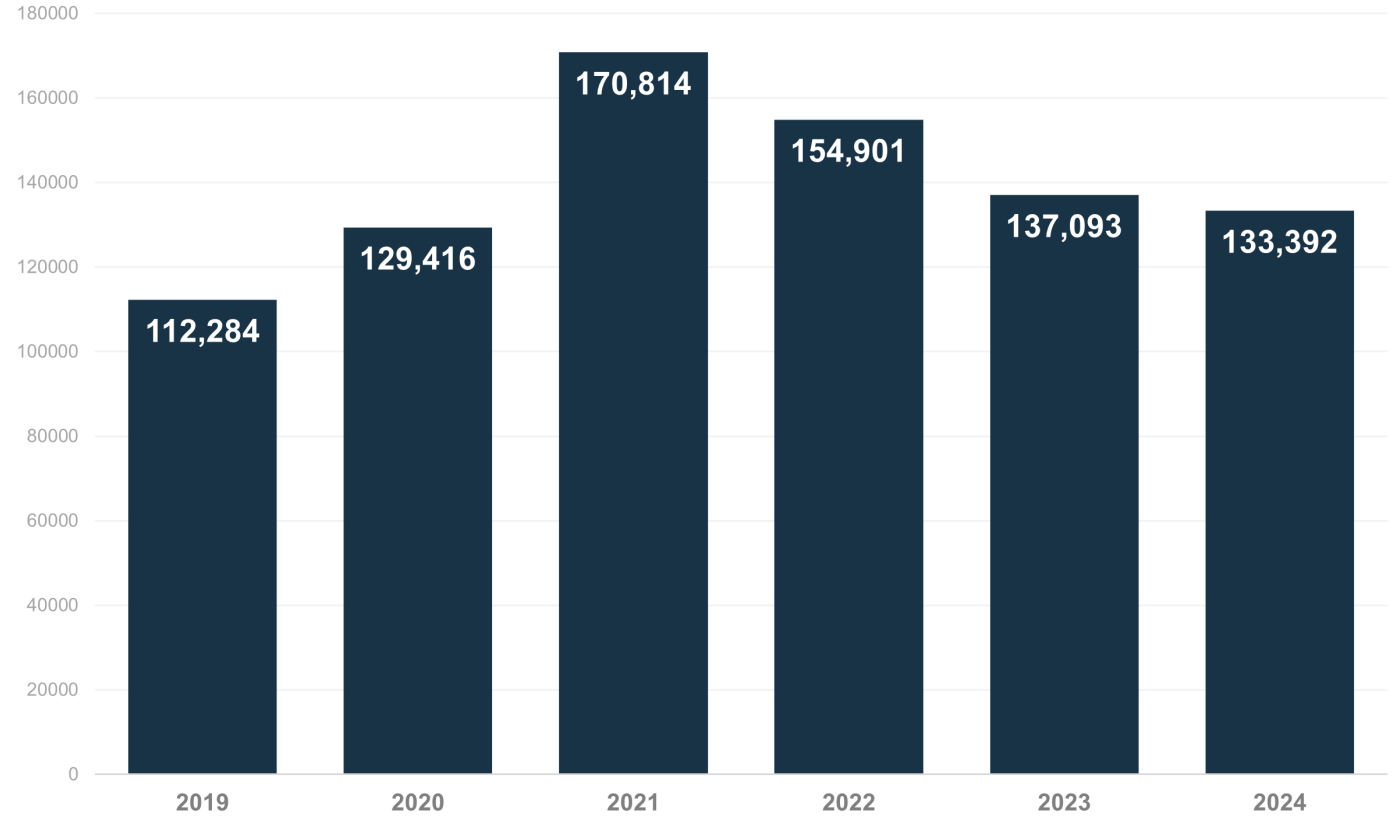
DEA's Methamphetamine Profiling Program performs in-depth chemical analyses of methamphetamine exhibits obtained from seizures made throughout the United States, providing a snapshot of samples submitted to the DEA laboratory system.

services, and commercial buses, though transport in privately owned vehicles remains the most common method. Popular concealment areas in vehicles include fuel tanks (with either packaged methamphetamine or methamphetamine in solution), natural voids in vehicle bodies, and inside tires. They also maintain a network of couriers, tunnels, and stash houses throughout Mexico and the United States to support the trafficking and distribution of methamphetamine. As with other drugs, some cartel members employ social media platforms to advertise and sell their product, recruit dealers and couriers, facilitate transactions, and further contribute to the steady availability of methamphetamine in most parts of the United States.

## Seizures

In 2024, DEA seized 50,575 kilograms of methamphetamine, a 27 percent decrease from the 2023 total of 69,234 kilograms. Methamphetamine pill seizures by DEA increased, however, from 2.6 million pills in 2023 to 3.2 million in 2024. NSS data reports law enforcement seizures of methamphetamine nationwide at 133,392 kilograms in 2024, a slight decrease from the previous year (see **Figure 28**).

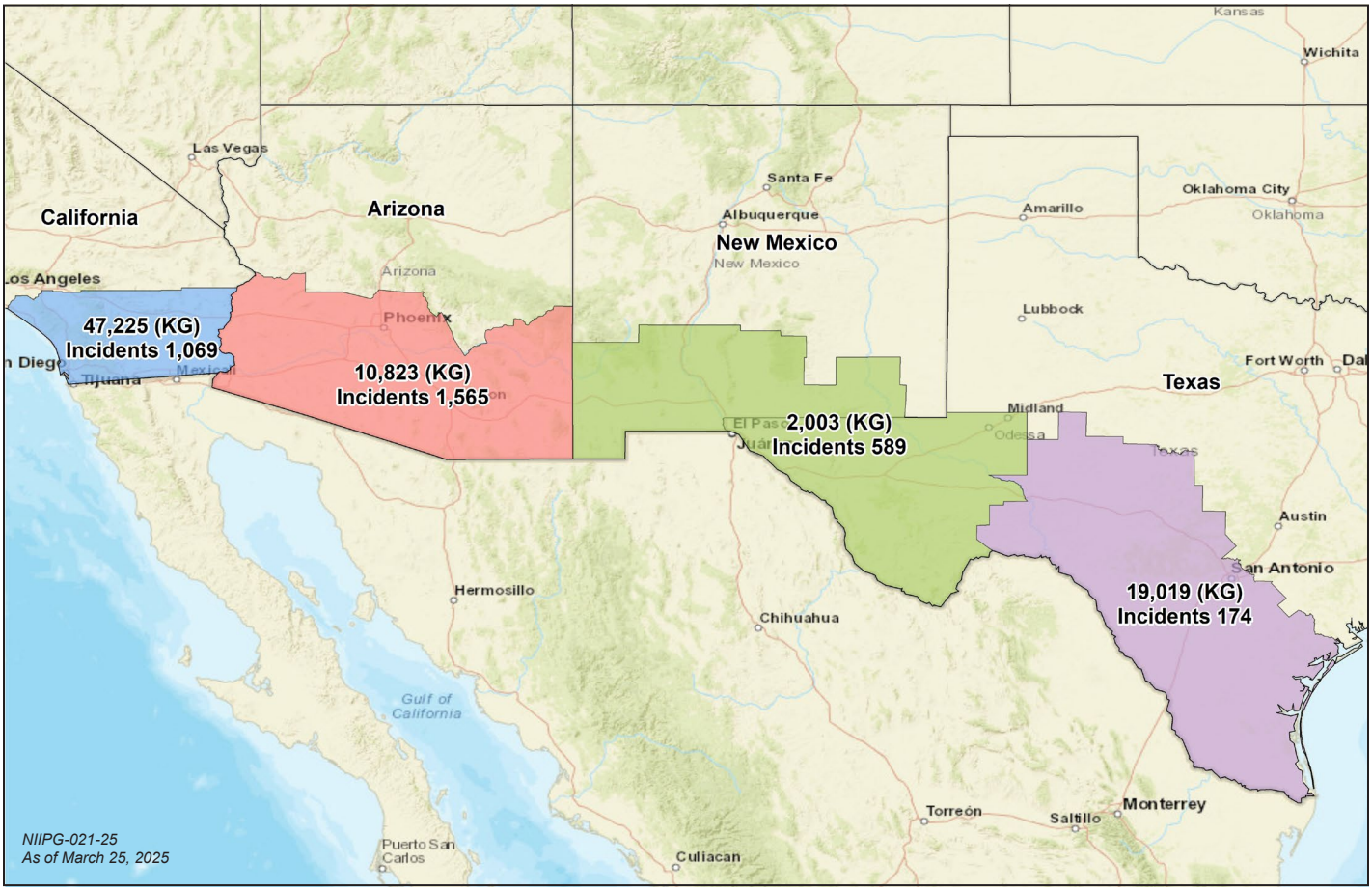
**Figure 28. Methamphetamine Seizures, in kilograms, 2019-2024**




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

Methamphetamine produced and trafficked by Mexican TCOs dominates the U.S. market, with most of the drug entering the United States at the SWB. U.S.-based criminal groups take over distribution once the methamphetamine is in the United States. According to NSS reporting, a total of 79,070 kilograms of methamphetamine was seized at the SWB by U.S. law enforcement in 2024, the majority at the California-Mexico border (see **Figure 29**).

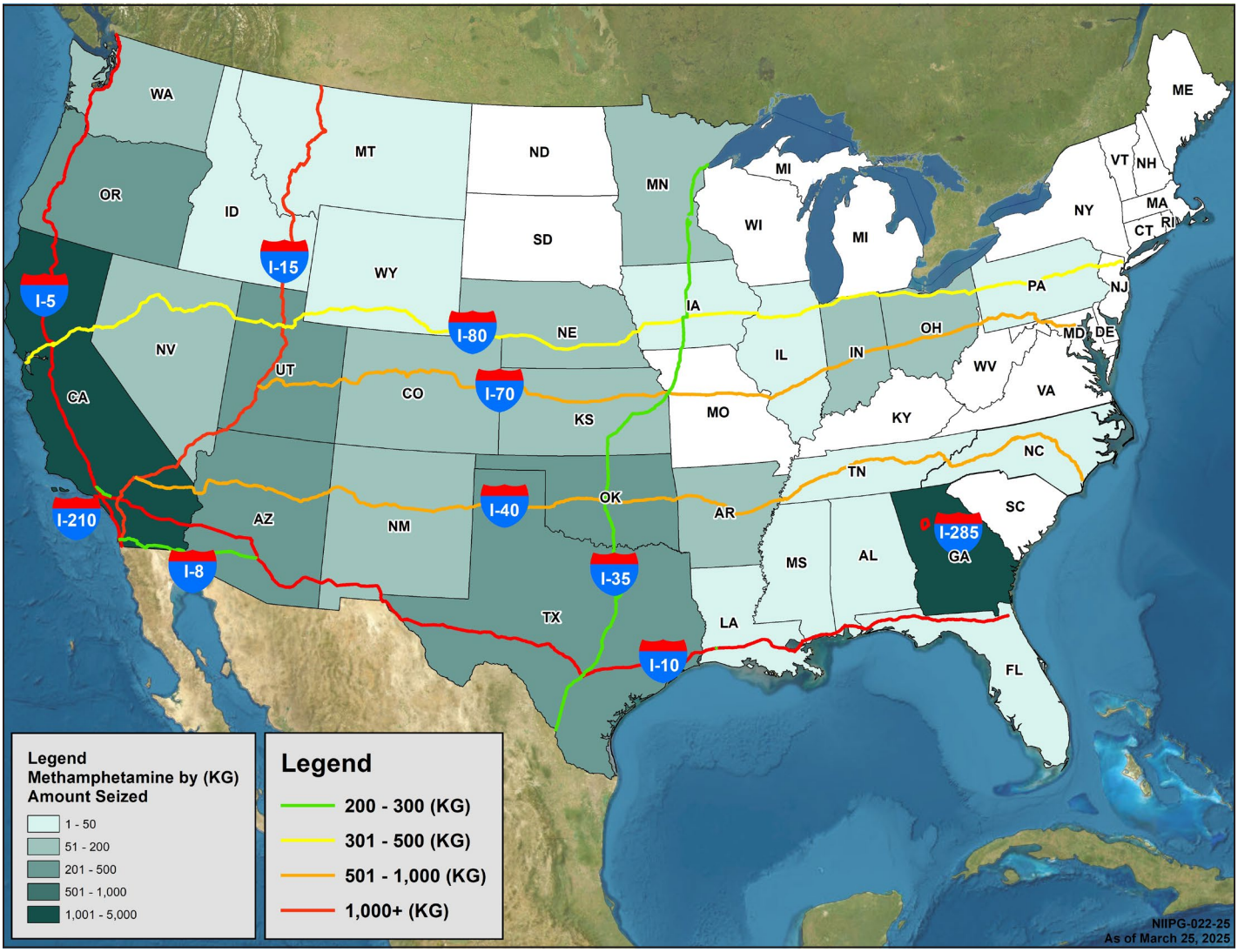
## Figure 29. Methamphetamine Seizures at the Southwest Border, by State, 2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

Once across the border, criminal groups use the U.S. Interstate Highway Systems for further distribution and delivery. Just over 9,000 kilograms of methamphetamine were seized on the top ten most heavily traveled U.S. Interstates in 2024, according to NSS (see **Figure 30**).

**Figure 30. Methamphetamine Seizures along the Top 10 Most-Traveled U.S. Interstates, by weight, 2024**

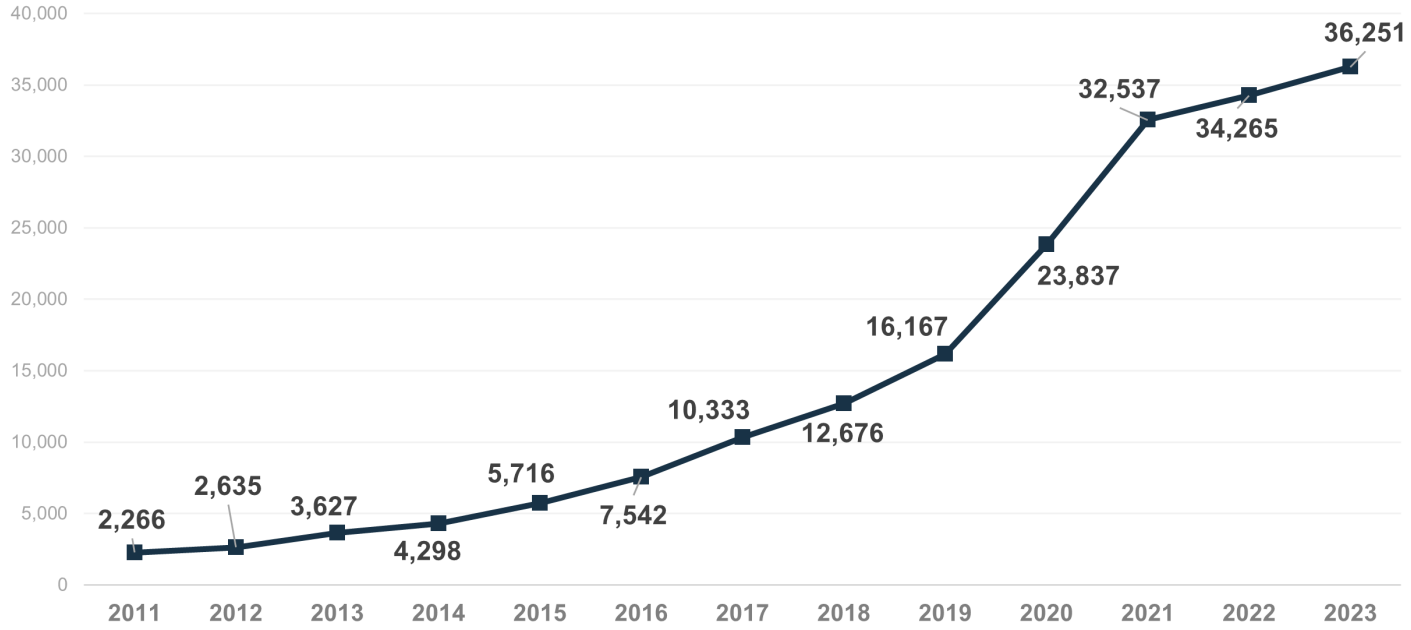



*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

## Methamphetamine is a persistent threat with overdose deaths continuing to rise.

CDC classifies methamphetamine as a "psychostimulant with abuse potential" and reports that the vast majority of overdose deaths implicating drugs in this category involve methamphetamine; the category includes MDMA, amphetamine, and cathinones. Deaths from psychostimulants have been increasing every year since 2011 and sharply increasing since 2019. In 2023, the CDC reported 36,251 psychostimulant drug overdose deaths in the United States, a six percent increase from the previous year (see **Figure 31**). According to the most recent provisional CDC data available, the United States recorded 30,023 overdose deaths from psychostimulants in the 12-month period ending in October 2024, an approximately 21 percent decline since the same period last year.

**Figure 31. Psychostimulant-Involved Drug Poisoning Deaths, 2011 – 2023**




*Source: National Center for Health Statistics/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## Mexican transnational criminal organizations continue to be the primary producers and suppliers of methamphetamine in the United States.

Mexican TCOs' long-standing expertise in operating clandestine methamphetamine production laboratories with high production capacity has allowed them to corner the methamphetamine market in the United States. Producers in the United States are not able to keep up with either the quantity or quality of methamphetamine produced on an industrial scale in Mexico, contributing to a precipitous decline in methamphetamine clandestine laboratory seizures across the United States.

## Methamphetamine in solution is a common smuggling tactic, and the first destination is a conversion laboratory.

Methamphetamine can be dissolved in almost any liquid, making it easy to conceal, difficult to detect, and inexpensive to transport when suspended in liquid (referred to as methamphetamine in solution). Methamphetamine is not useable in this form, however. Distributors must first extract the methamphetamine from the liquid in what is called a conversion laboratory.

Methamphetamine conversion labs are not used for production, but rather to recrystallize methamphetamine in solution back into crystal methamphetamine. The conversion lab uses a heat source to evaporate the liquid and extract the methamphetamine from the solution. According to NSS reporting, U.S. law enforcement seized only eight conversion labs in 2024, an enormous 73 percent decrease since 2023 when 34 labs were seized.

Seizures of methamphetamine in solution decreased by a similar 75 percent, according to NSS reporting, corresponding to current DEA field office reports. Methamphetamine in solution has always accounted for a small proportion of overall methamphetamine seizures but had risen incrementally each year until 2024. The dramatic drop in both methamphetamine in solution

seizures and conversion lab seizures could indicate that this smuggling tactic is falling out of favor with Mexican TCOs and domestic traffickers. Seizures of crystal methamphetamine remain at historically high levels, and an inundated market may have decreased the incentive to traffic methamphetamine in solution.

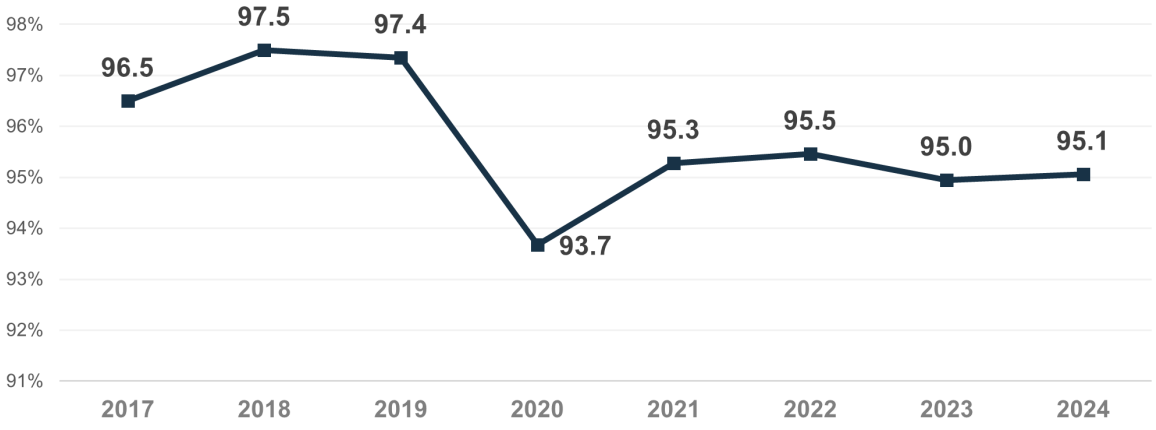
## Despite some restrictions in Mexico on precursor chemicals, Mexican TCOs continue to adapt by finding alternative manufacturing methods, using uncontrolled pre-precursor chemicals, and changing shipping routes and methods.

Chemical shipments originating from China are diverted in several ways, to include purposeful mislabeling, shipping to and diversion from legitimate companies in Mexico or Central America, and diversion from legitimate industries for smuggling to clandestine laboratories in Mexico.

Mexican TCOs have moved away from heavily restricted precursors in favor of less restricted, easier-to-obtain chemicals, mainly involving the precursor phenyl-2-propanone (P2P). According to the 2023 Methamphetamine Profiling Program report, over 98 percent of seized methamphetamine samples analyzed were produced using some variation of the P2P production method, 90 percent of which were produced using the P2P precursor phenyl-acetic acid (PAA). Through 2024, methamphetamine seizures in the sampling group averaged 95 percent purity. Over the past several years, overall purity has remained stable at an average purity near 95 percent across the United States (see **Figure 32**).

In August 2021, DEA forensic chemists determined that Mexican TCOs were using a chemical reaction that allows discarded waste products from methamphetamine production to be recycled through the production process. This recycling is repeated until nearly all waste has been converted into viable methamphetamine, maximizing profit and efficiency. This allows Mexican cartels to produce more methamphetamine for distribution, adding to the already commanding control they have over the U.S. market.

**Figure 32. Methamphetamine Percent Purity, 2017-2024**




*Source: DEA Methamphetamine Profiling Program*

## The product innovation of methamphetamine in pill form illustrates the determination of Mexican TCOs to make methamphetamine appealing to non-traditional users, particularly those in the prescription pill and "club drug" user population.

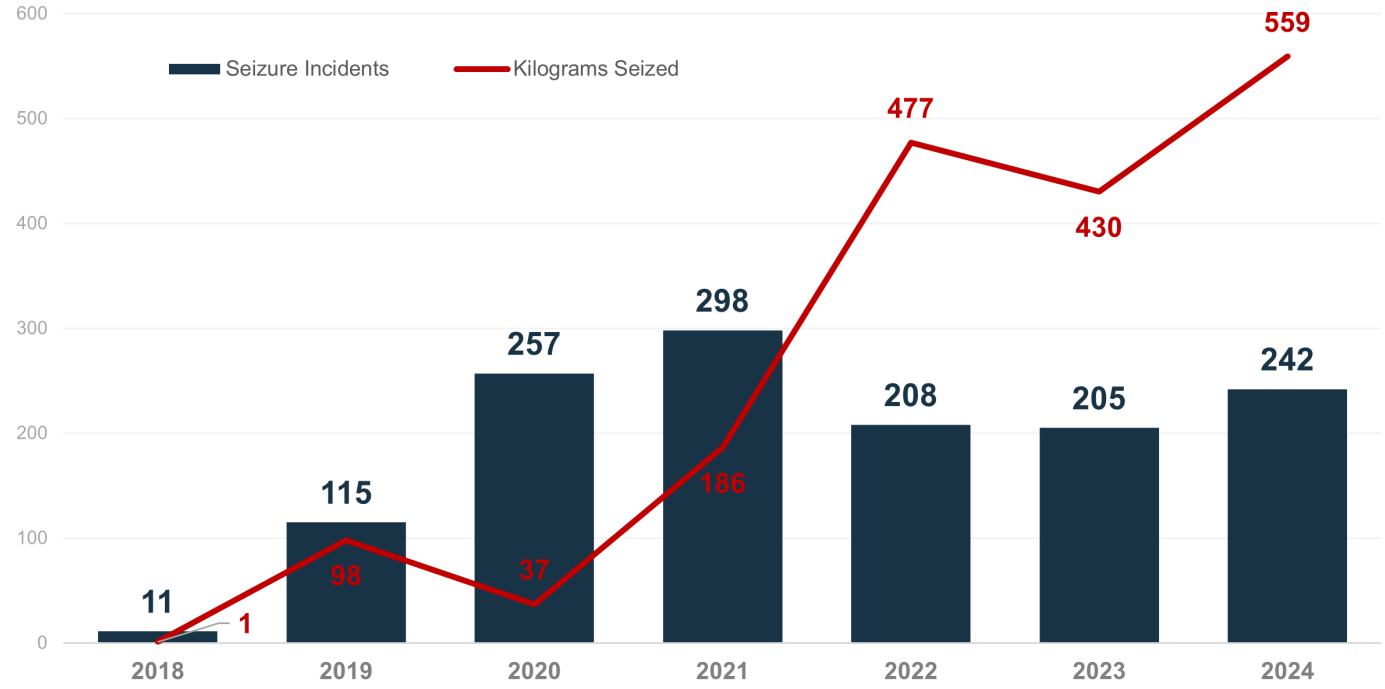
Methamphetamine is often sold as fake pharmaceutical pills mimicking legitimate prescription pills (typically Adderall) or disguised as MDMA tablets. Fake MDMA tablets, like fake Adderall pills, may be an attempt at attracting a new user base by supplementing or replacing a more expensive product (MDMA) with a cheaper, more easily obtained drug (methamphetamine). The prevalence of fake Adderall pills, or fake MDMA tablets, containing methamphetamine heightens the risk of unintentional drug poisonings (see **Figure 33**).

**Figure 33. Fake Adderall Pills Containing Methamphetamine (left) and Fake MDMA Tablets Containing Methamphetamine (right)**

*Source: DEA*

According to NSS data, the number of methamphetamine pill seizure incidents has remained relatively steady since 2022 (see **Figure 34**). However, the overall weight of seizures, represented by the line in Figure 34, was far higher in 2024 than the previous year, with 242 seizures weighing a total of 559 kilograms. This trend suggests that Mexican TCOs are confident that a reliable consumer market exists to justify larger shipments of methamphetamine in pill form.

## Figure 34. Methamphetamine Pill Seizures, by kilogram and number of incidents, 2018-2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

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# COCAINE

## Overview

The trafficking and abuse of cocaine has been a serious drug threat in the United States for over four decades and its persistence is a sustained concern for law enforcement and public health officials. Colombia remains the primary source country for cocaine entering the United States, followed by Peru and Bolivia. Mexico-based cartels obtain multi-ton cocaine shipments from South America and smuggle it via sea, air, or overland to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean for subsequent movement into the United States. Once in the United States, U.S. based criminal groups and street gangs distribute the cocaine, some of which is converted to crack at the local level (see **Figure 35**).

**Figure 35. Kilogram Cocaine Bricks with Scorpion Stamp (left), Powder Cocaine (center), and Crack Cocaine (right)**

*Source: DEA*

Approximately 84 percent of the domestic cocaine samples seized in 2024 by U.S. authorities and analyzed by DEA as part of the Cocaine Signature Program (CSP), were determined to be of Colombian origin, compared to 88 percent in 2023. For 25 years, the CSP has identified Colombia as the primary source for cocaine in the United States. CSP analysis indicates an increase in domestic cocaine hydrochloride purity at the wholesale level, from 86 percent in 2023 to 88 percent in 2024.

DEA's Cocaine Signature Program (CSP) provides scientific data and intelligence information on illicit cocaine. The CSP receives submissions from U.S. law enforcement and international law enforcement partners which are analyzed for purity, cutting agents, processing solvents, and classified to a geographic origin. CSP findings provide a snapshot of current cocaine processing and trafficking trends.

## Fatalities involving cocaine remain high but are slightly lower than in 2023.

According to CDC, fatal cocaine overdoses increased steadily from 2015 to 2023. Provisional CDC data for 2024, however, shows that the number of cocaine-related overdose deaths decreased 25 percent in the 12-month period ending in October 2024, recording 22,678 deaths during that period.

Cocaine use in the United States decreased slightly from 2022 to 2023, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The annual NSDUH tracks drug use and behavioral health in U.S. citizens aged 12 and older. In 2023, five million people self-reported using cocaine, compared to 5.3 million people self-reporting cocaine use in 2022.

## Cocaine-Fentanyl Mixtures

The sale of cocaine adulterated with fentanyl is an increasing public safety concern, as cocaine-related overdose deaths rose steadily for eight consecutive years, the substantial majority of which involved the co-use of synthetic opioids (usually fentanyl). While unintentional mixing of cocaine and fentanyl does occur, U.S.-based DTOs are intentionally adulterating cocaine with fentanyl to create a “super speedball” or to heighten the addictive qualities in cocaine for increased profit. According to NFLIS, fentanyl and fentanyl-related compounds were co-reported in over 25 percent of all cocaine submissions in 2024.

## Seizures

According to NSS reporting, a total of approximately 63 metric tons of cocaine powder was seized by U.S. law enforcement in 2024, an 18 percent increase from approximately 53 metric tons seized in 2023.

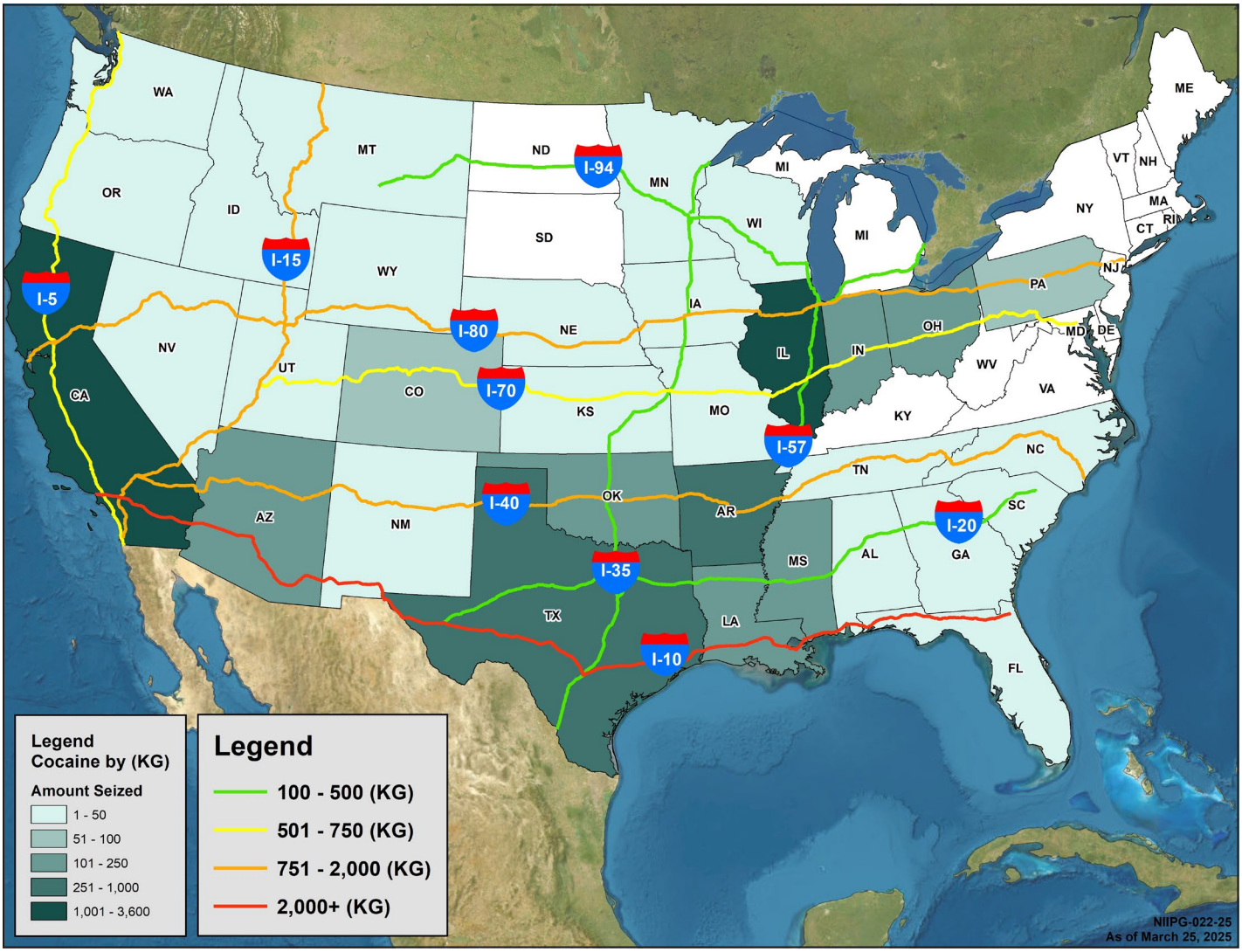
Mexican TCOs dominate cocaine trafficking into and through the United States, transporting it through the SWB and later relying on U.S.-based criminal groups for distribution. According to reporting from NSS, a total of 17,181 kilograms of cocaine was seized at the SWB by U.S. law enforcement in 2024, the majority at the California-Mexico border (see **Figure 36**).

Once across the border, criminal groups use the U.S. Interstate Highway System for further distribution and delivery. NSS data shows that just over 7,000 kilograms of cocaine were seized on the top ten most heavily traveled U.S. Interstates in 2024 (see **Figure 37**).

## Figure 36. Cocaine Seizures at the Southwest Border, by State, 2024

*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

## Figure 37. Cocaine Seizures along the Top 10 Most-Traveled U.S. Interstates, by weight, 2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

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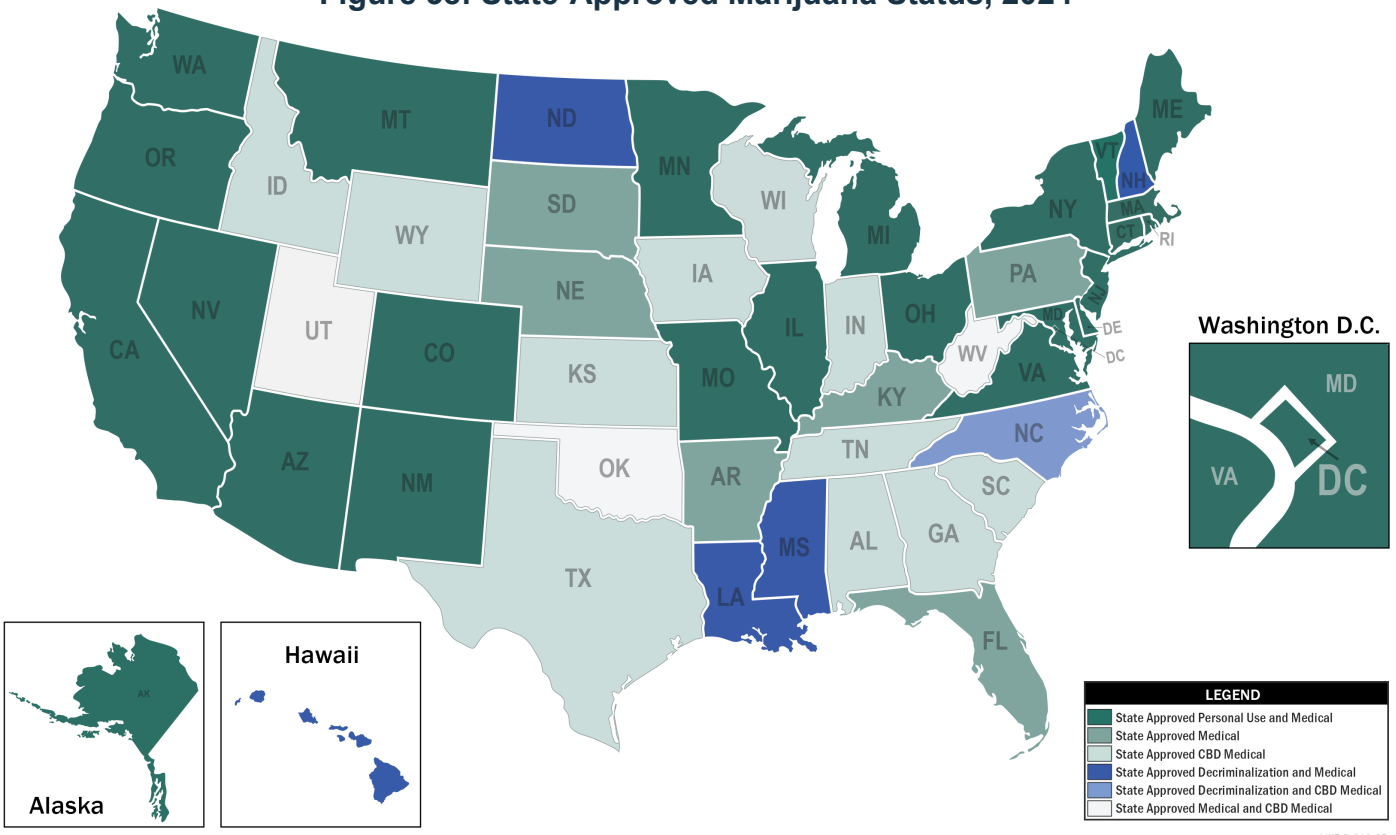
# MARIJUANA

## Overview

Marijuana remains illegal under federal law and is the most commonly used illicit drug in the United States. Cannabis growers in states where cultivation is legal are the main suppliers of illicit marijuana markets in the rest of the United States, growing in excess of quotas and legal market needs. Marijuana has been "legalized" and or "decriminalized" at the state level for recreational use in 24 states and the District of Columbia, and for "medical" use in 39 states and the District of Columbia, as of January 2024 (see **Figure 38**). Nebraska is the most recent state to "legalize" marijuana for medical use. Despite these measures, during the last two decades, the black market for marijuana has expanded significantly as Chinese and other Asian TCOs have taken control of the marijuana trade. These organized crime groups, as well as Mexican cartels, are profiting from

**Figure 38: State-Approved Marijuana Status, 2024**




*Source: DEA*

NIIPG-019-25
As of March 28, 2025

both illegal cultivation and sales, and from exploiting the "legal" market. The price of marijuana in illegal U.S. markets has remained largely stable for years, even as the potency of marijuana has increased exponentially.

Delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. THC levels in marijuana continue to climb and are largely unregulated in states where marijuana has been legalized. The potency levels in THC-based products, such as dabs and edibles, are often even higher – sometimes as high as 90 percent. Product labeling is not controlled and is often significantly inaccurate, putting consumers – especially children who may accidentally consume THC edibles because of their misleading packaging – in greater jeopardy than they are likely aware of. The potency of THC in plant marijuana and in hash oil is also at an all-time high, further increasing the risk of adverse, even dangerous, side effects. Data from the University of Mississippi's Potency Monitoring Program, shows that potency increased steadily since the study began in 1995. As of 2022, THC potency in plant marijuana averaged over 16 percent, from less than four percent in 1995.

**Figure 39. Dried Marijuana Buds and Marijuana Leaves**

*Source: DEA*

Over the past 10 years, Chinese TCOs have come to dominate the cultivation and distribution of marijuana throughout the United States, a phenomenon noted from California to Maine. The purchase of real estate for both indoor and outdoor grows, and for the storage of needed equipment, is often initially funded through family and community connections, both in China and in the United States, as many seek to skirt restrictions on the movement of currency from Chinese banks to foreign countries. Undocumented Chinese immigrants, many of whom spent years in Mexico and were lured to the United States with offers of legal employment, staff many of the grow sites alongside undocumented Mexican immigrants in similar circumstances. The undocumented migrants are closely monitored by the Chinese TCO members who own and manage the grows. Most of the grow sites are located in states where the cannabis industry is "legal," though most do not follow the established licensure process or have obtained their licenses through falsified means. They face little prison time, if any, when caught, and often move to a new location in the same state or to another "legal" state once discovered.

The Chinese TCOs are producing the most potent form of marijuana in the history of drug trafficking, with a THC content averaging 25 to 30 percent, compared to a national average of 16 percent. The grow sites use pesticides and fertilizers shipped from China, including many chemicals banned in the United States for decades because of adverse health and environmental consequences. Not only are these chemicals entering the water, soil, and air around the grow sites, some quantity of these chemicals also remains on the processed marijuana that is ingested by users.

### Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis Program Findings on Chinese/Asian TCO Involvement in Illegal Marijuana Grows, 2024

The Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis program, managed by the California Department of Justice and funded primarily through the DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program, deployed three Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis teams to 28 counties across California from July 2 to September 29, 2024. The teams eradicated over 900,000 cannabis plants from 855 illegal cannabis cultivation sites, seized 55.6 tons of processed marijuana and 156 weapons at the cultivation sites, and made 209 arrests.

Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis data showed an increase in Chinese and other Asian TCO involvement in illegal marijuana cultivation. Grows controlled by Chinese/Asian TCOs accounted for:

- 161 of the total 855 sites
- 35 percent (319,900) of the total plants eradicated
- 41 percent (22.5 tons) of the total processed cannabis seized
- 33 percent (70) of the total arrests at the sites

In addition, Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis teams seized 26.6 tons of fertilizer and 83.1 gallons of restricted pesticide at the sites.

*Source: Eradication and Prevention of Illicit Cannabis, State of California Department of Justice, 2023 Annual Report*

*Source: California Department of Justice*



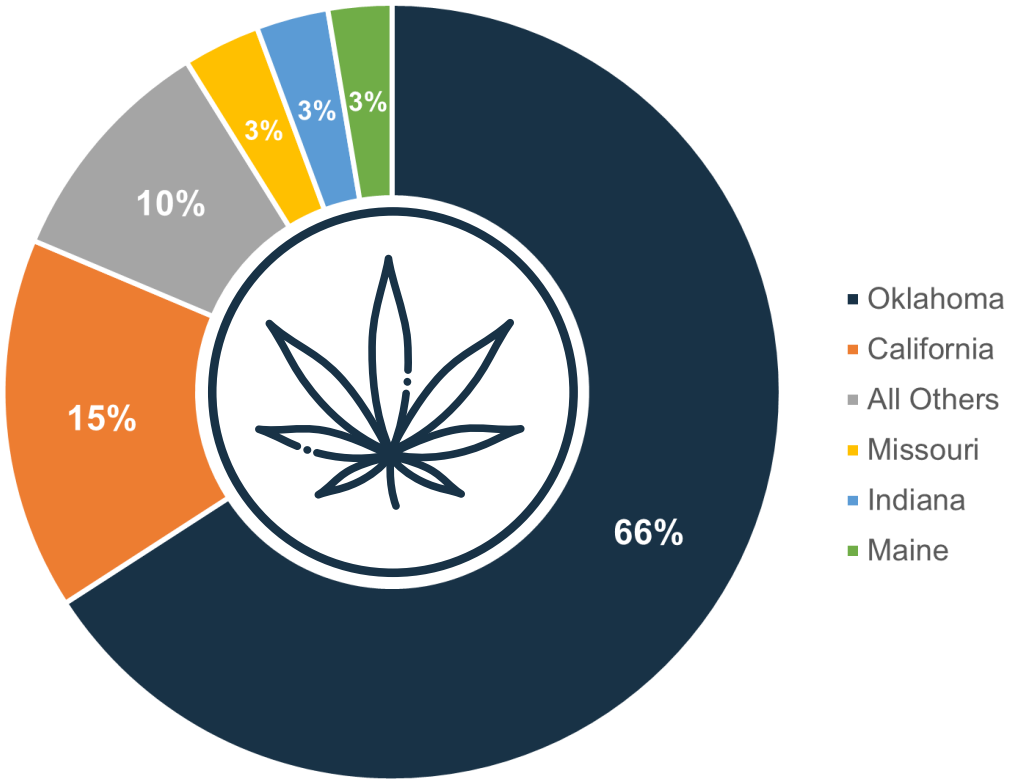
Many of these illicit grow sites pretend to operate under business registrations granted by state licensing authorities in jurisdictions where marijuana cultivation and sales are "legal" at the state level. However, absent overt evidence such as the trafficking of marijuana across state lines or the commission of non-drug crimes such as money laundering and human trafficking, it can be difficult for law enforcement to immediately identify violations or discover an illegal grow. Asian TCOs defy restrictions on plant quantities, production quotas, and non-licensed sales, and hide behind state-by-state variations in laws governing plant counts, registration requirements, and accountability practices.

Domestically produced marijuana is transported via U.S. Interstate highways in personally owned vehicles, semi-trucks, and tractor-trailers. Facilitators working for the Chinese TCOs and/or Mexican cartels transport large amounts of marijuana directly from "legal" states to states that have not legalized recreational use and those where state-level recreational approval is sufficiently recent to not yet have an established, regulated cannabis industry. The Chinese networks also work with smaller, localized criminal groups for transport and distribution. The Chinese TCOs have an extensive transportation and distribution network that extends nationwide and overseas. Due to its potency, marijuana produced in Chinese TCO-controlled grows is in demand across the United States and in Western Europe, to include Great Britain, France, and Spain. In the United States, large shipments of marijuana are routinely transported via tractor-trailer, while smaller amounts are transported in personal vehicles using the "shotgun approach" to minimize risk. The "shotgun approach" involves sending multiple vehicles, usually carrying no more than a couple hundred pounds of marijuana each, to the same destination to avoid the loss of a single, large shipment. Overseas shipments commonly travel via commercial flights from the United States and Canada, or on container vessels departing from a U.S. port.

An equally extensive money laundering network fueled by the Chinese Underground Banking System (CUBS), with a main hub in New York City, is used to return drug proceeds to mainland China. Among the multiple methods the Chinese TCOs employ to repatriate drug proceeds are the laundering of money through registered marijuana grows using straw owners, casinos, and mortgage fraud.

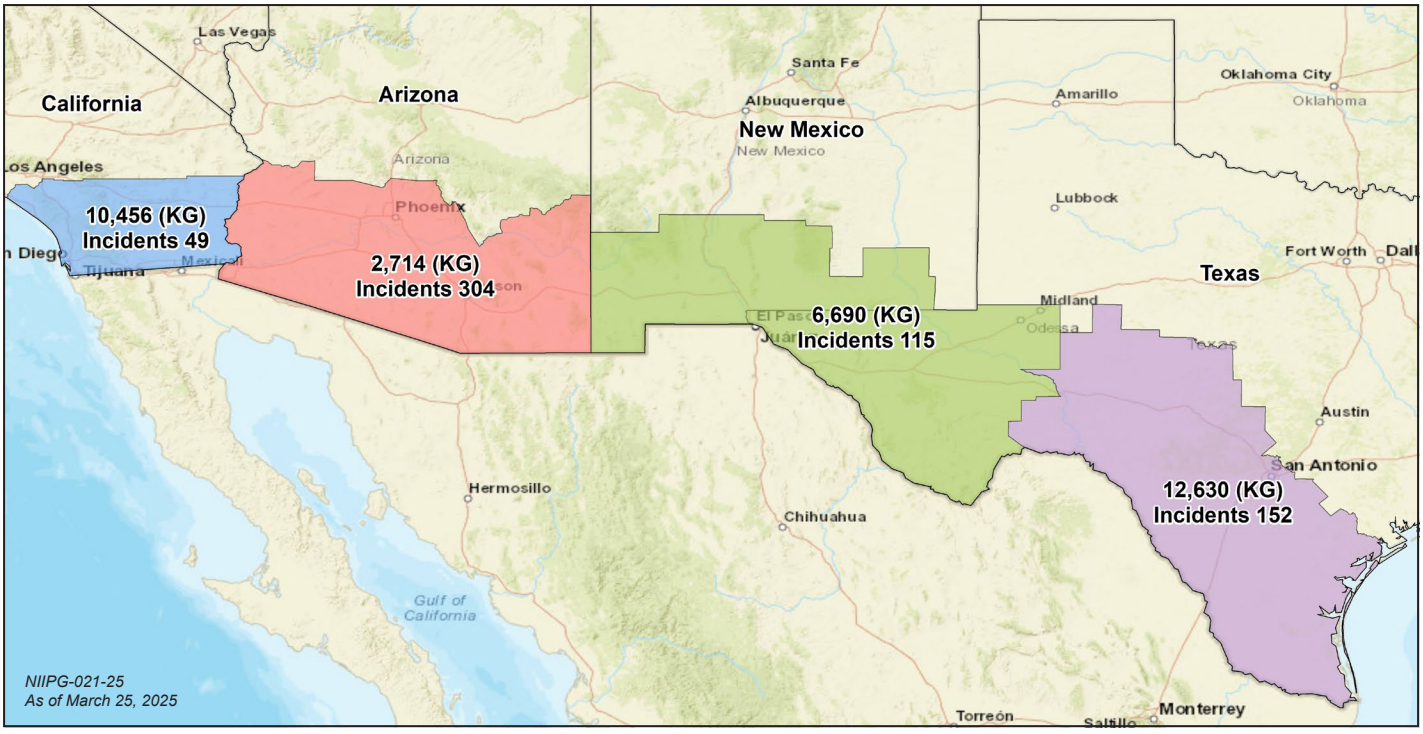
In 2024, marijuana seized in Oklahoma accounted for 66 percent of the total amount seized by DEA, with California, Missouri, Indiana and Maine rounding out the top 5 states (see **Figure 40**). The seizure state is not necessarily indicative of where the marijuana was cultivated or destined, as marijuana is often seized in transit.

**Figure 40. Top 5 Marijuana Seizure States, in kilograms, 2024**



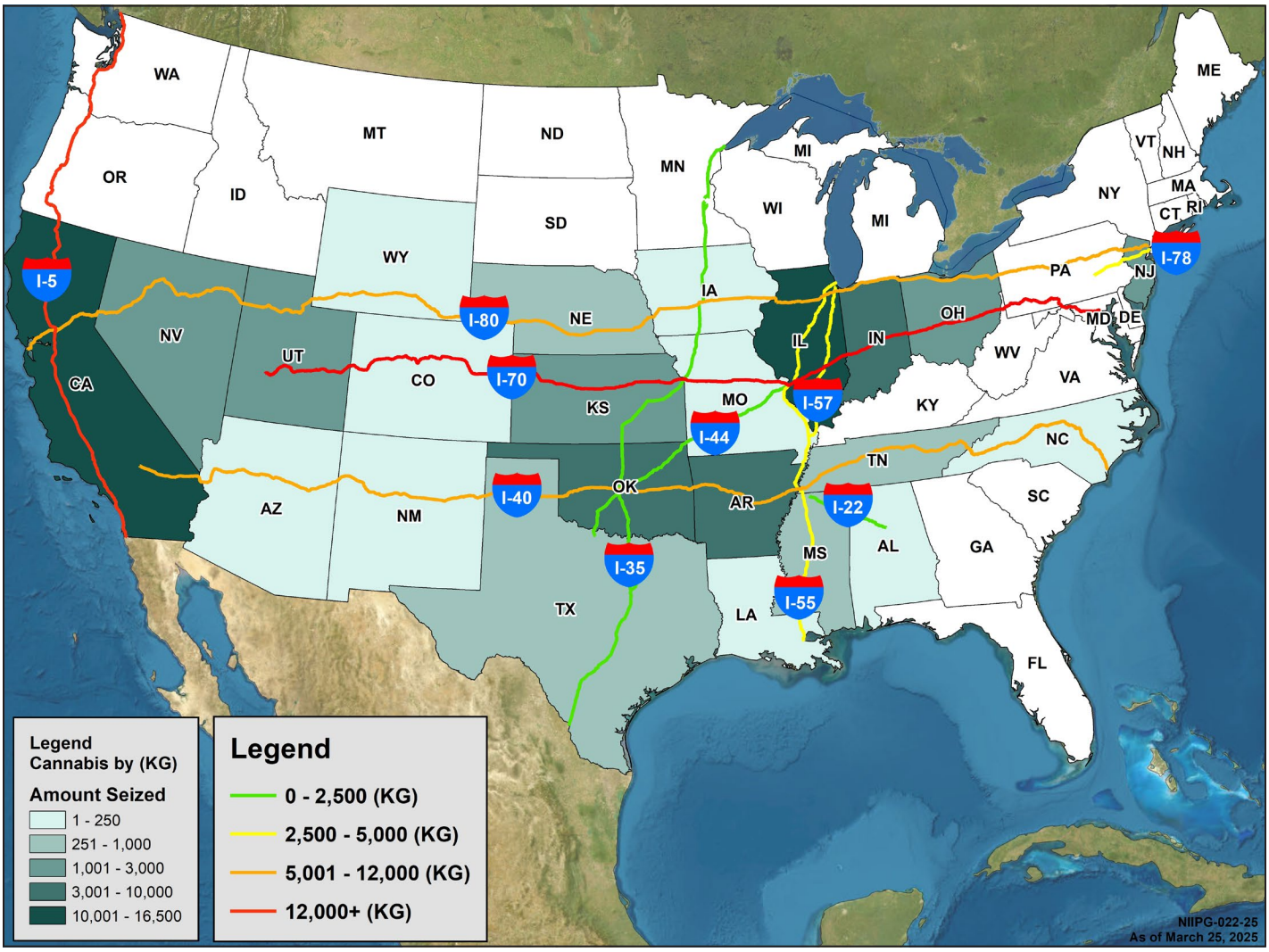

*Source: DEA, data retrieved March 21, 2025*

**Figure 41. Cannabis Seizures at the Southwest Border, by State, 2024**




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

**Figure 42. Marijuana Seizures along Top 10 Most-Traveled U.S. Interstates, by weight, 2024**




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

Mexican TCOs continue to traffic Mexico-cultivated marijuana into and through the United States, transporting it through the SWB and later relying on U.S.-based criminal groups for distribution. According to NSS reporting, U.S. law enforcement seized 32,490 kilograms of marijuana at the SWB in 2024, the majority at the East Texas-Mexico border (see **Figure 41**).

Once across the border, criminal groups use the U.S. Interstate Highway System for further distribution and delivery. In 2024, nearly 700 marijuana seizures weighing more than 63,000 kilograms were seized along the top 10 most heavily traveled interstate corridors alone, according to NSS data (see **Figure 42**). Approximately 60 percent of the total was seized along east-west interstate routes, mostly from vehicles traveling eastbound. Of the 40 percent seized along north-south interstate routes, approximately 90 percent was seized from vehicles traveling northbound.

## The Public Health Impact of THC Use and the Environmental, Health, and Safety Impact of Cannabis Grows

The NSDUH revealed that marijuana/THC use increased in every age group in 2022. During 2023, the percentage of Americans reporting regular use of marijuana and/or THC products remained elevated: almost 22 percent of all respondents said they use marijuana; young adults (age 18-25) represent the highest marijuana-using demographic at 36.5 percent. States that “legalized”

marijuana usually have the highest rates of marijuana use in the country. The data also shows use is sharply increasing in vulnerable demographics, including youth and young adults whose brains are still developing. Past-year marijuana use among anyone over age 12 increased over 16 percent, from nearly 53 million in 2021 to nearly 62 million in 2023.[d]

In 2022, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which administers the NSDUH, began more closely tracking the vaping of nicotine and marijuana (see **Figure 43**).[e] More than 4 million youth and young adults (age 12-20) – about 1 in 9 – reported using marijuana in the past year. According to the NSDUH, certain methods of marijuana consumption may be more appealing to certain age groups. Among users 12-to-17 years old, the percentage that consumed marijuana by vaping, smoking, and eating/drinking increased from 2022 to 2023 (see **Figure 44**).

Increased U.S. production, lowered risk perception, all-time-high THC levels, and enticing product marketing, have resulted in increased injury due to unintentional exposure to marijuana and THC products, particularly among children. Calls to poison control centers and admissions to emergency rooms related to the ingestion of THC edibles by children aged 12 and younger grew by more than 3,311 percent from 2016 to 2022, according to data from America's Poison Centers. During 2024, poison centers received the highest numbers of reports on record. THC/marijuana edibles are often sold in packaging with bright colors, cartoon characters, or resembling products that are marketed to young children, such as breakfast cereals and snacks.

Delta-8 THC, often sold as "weed light," can be present in edibles, extracts, and vapes, and may be sold "legally" in hemp or marijuana marketplaces or sold illegally. These products may contain other cannabinoids, terpenes, or chemical contaminants that are not listed on the product label. The FDA has not evaluated or approved delta-8 THC products for use, but issued warning labels to companies marketing such products, citing concerns over misbranding, illegal marketing, and potential health risks, especially when these products are packaged in ways that appeal to children or resemble popular snacks (see **Figure 45**). The typical packaging of these products increases the potential for children or unsuspecting adults to consume a product that contains delta-8 THC without realizing it, thereby posing an increased health risk.

**Figure 43. Common Vaping Devices**

*Source: DEA*



*d. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health asks if the respondent has consumed marijuana in the past year, and if so, what methods they used to consume marijuana in the past year. "Respondents could indicate multiple modes of marijuana use; thus, these response categories are not mutually exclusive."*

*e. Vaping devices come in a variety of shapes and sizes, with some resembling USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday objects that are often difficult for parents and teachers to recognize.*

## Figure 44. Top Modes of Marijuana Use Self-Reported to National Survey on Drug Use and Health

| Mode of use | Users 12-17, 2022 | Users 12-17, 2023 | 2023 Change from 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Smoking | 76.6% | 79.3% | ▲ 2.7% |
| Vaping | 59.7% | 63.4% | ▲ 3.7% |
| Dabbing Waxes, Shatter, or Concentrates | 23.3% | 16.9% | ▼ -6.4% |
| Eating or Drinking | 36.1% | 38.5% | ▲ 2.4% |
| Lotion, Cream, or Patches to the Skin | 8.2% | 4.9% | ▼ -3.3% |
| Drops, Strips, Lozenges, or Sprays | 2.2% | 1.0% | ▼ -1.2% |

*Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health*

## Figure 45. Delta-8 THC-Infused Products

*Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration*

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# NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

## Overview

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), many of which are unregulated and untested, are a diverse group of synthetic substances designed to have effects similar to controlled substances. Some users believe NPS are safer than illicit drugs and they are often referred to as “legal highs”.

Several of these drugs have been around for decades but, over time, the chemical makeup has changed. NPS include phenethylamines (MDMA, ecstasy, molly); ketamine; synthetic cannabinoids (K2, spice); synthetic cathinones (bath salts); phencyclidine-type substances (PCP); tryptamines (AMT, foxy); aminoindanes (MDAI gold); and piperazines (A2, Pep X). According to DEA forensic laboratory reporting, the top two NPS categories are phenethylamines and synthetic cannabinoids – both of which are controlled in Schedule I of the CSA.

## Ketamine

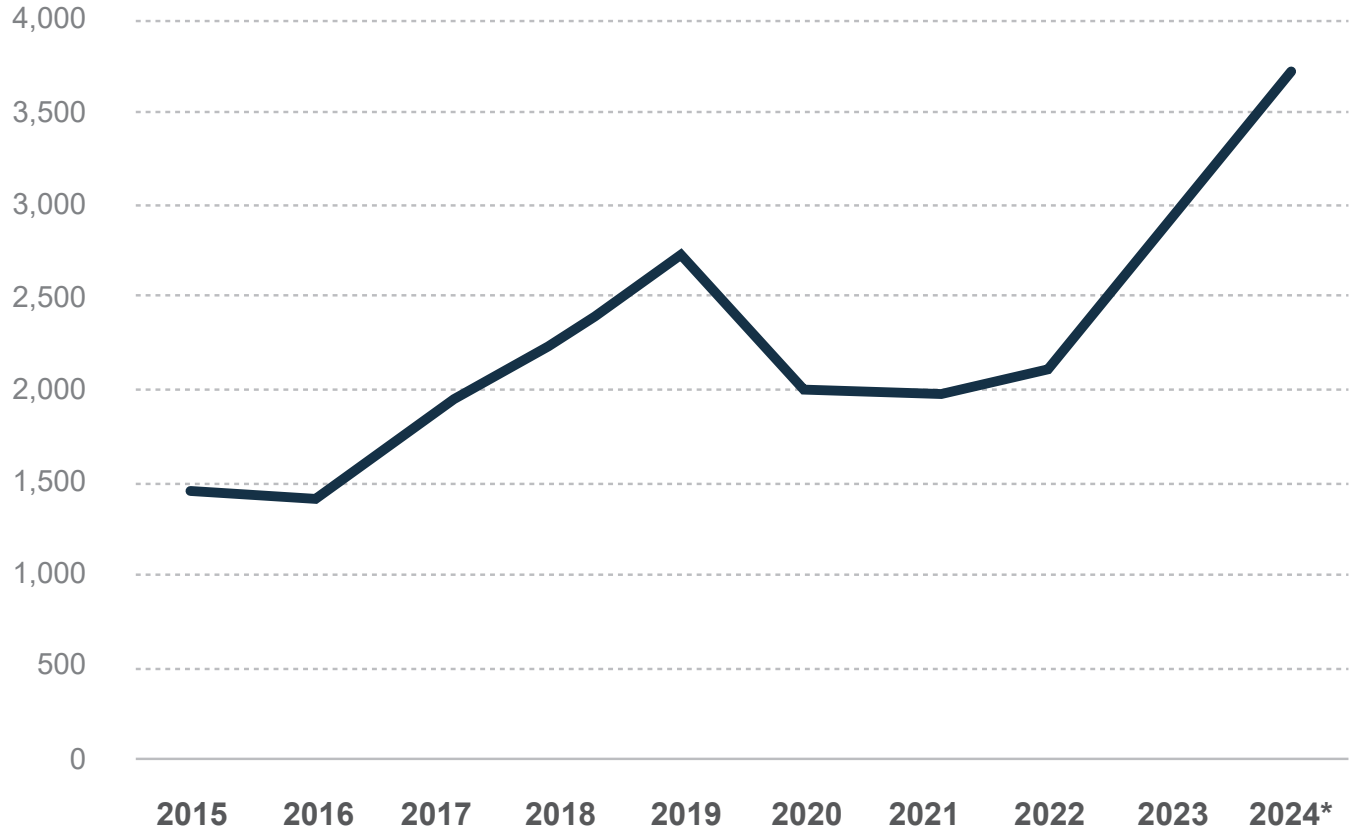
Ketamine is a dissociative anesthetic that has some hallucinogenic effects, distorting perceptions of sight and sound, and making the user feel disconnected. The user feels a sense of calm and relaxation similar to sedation and often does not have any memory of events that have occurred while under the influence of ketamine. Ketamine goes by street names such as Cat Tranquilizer, Cat Valium, Special K, Vitamin K, Super K, Jet K, Kit Kat, Purple, Special La Coke, and Super Acid. It can be mixed into liquids or converted to (or purchased as) powder that is snorted, injected, or smoked.

Ketamine is approved as an injectable anesthetic for use in humans and animals and esketamine is approved as a nasal spray for treatment-resistant depression (see **Figure 46**). Between 2019 and 2023, approximately 11,500 ketamine exhibits were submitted to DEA forensic laboratories. Ketamine submissions increased by seven percent in 2022 and 31 percent in 2023, rebounding to a level last encountered in 2019 (see **Figure 47**).

**Figure 46. Vials of Veterinary and Clinical-Use Ketamine**

*Source: DEA*

**Figure 47. Ketamine Submissions to DEA Forensic Laboratories, 2015-2024**




**2024 data is preliminary and subject to change*
*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10, 2025*

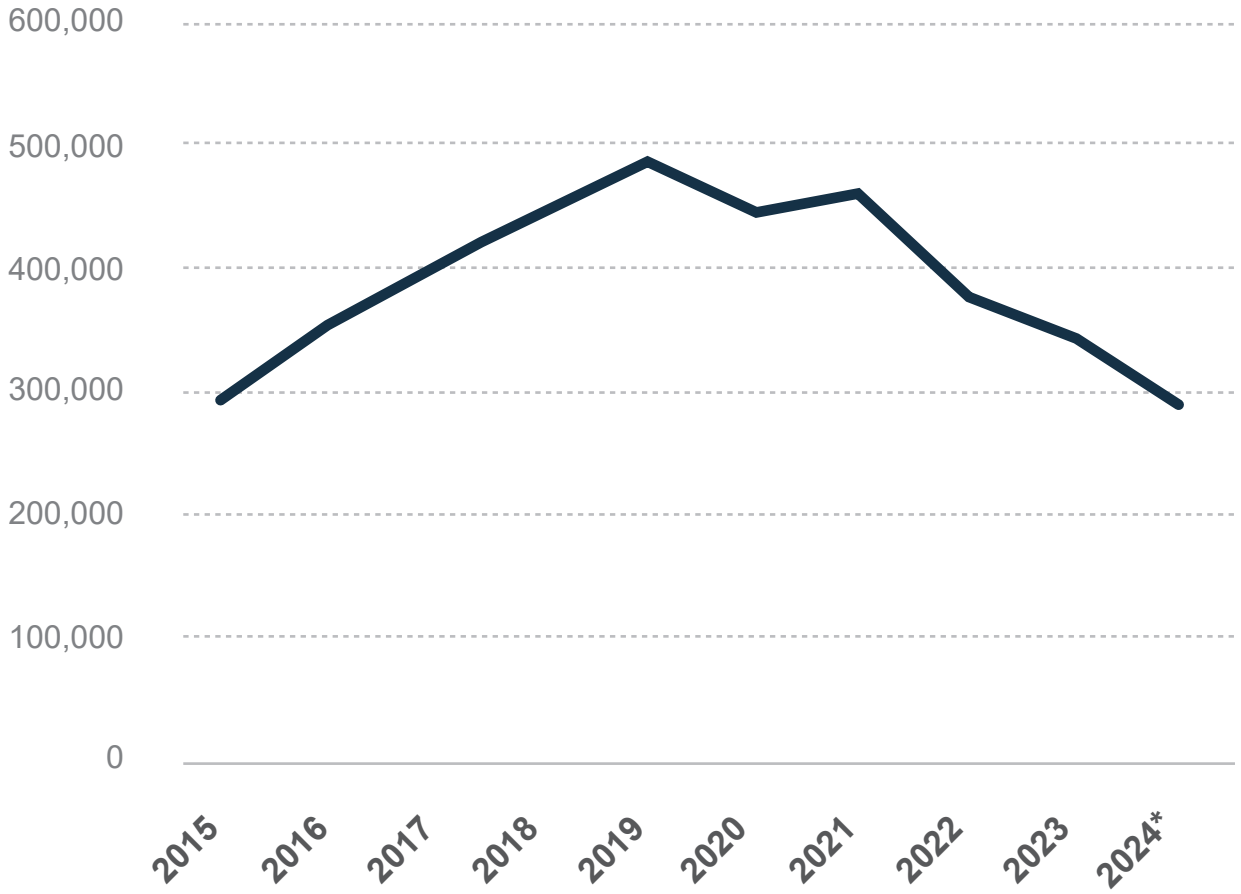
## Phenethylamines

Phenethylamines are a large category of substances with diverse psychopharmacological properties, ranging from hallucinogenic to stimulant properties, and have been encountered as powders, liquids, laced on edible items and soaked onto blotter papers. Ecstasy and molly (pill and powder forms of MDMA, respectively) are the most common types of phenethylamines. The ingestion of very small amounts of these drugs can result in seizures, cardiac and respiratory arrest, and death. According to DEA reporting, the top three phenethylamines submitted to DEA forensic laboratories are methamphetamine, amphetamine, and MDMA. Overall submissions of phenethylamines have dropped sharply (see **Figure 49**), but individual data sets show that methamphetamine and amphetamine submissions have decreased while MDMA submissions have increased.

**Figure 48. MDMA (Ecstasy) Tablets**

*Source: DEA*

**Figure 49. Phenethylamine Submissions to DEA Forensic Laboratories, 2015-2024**

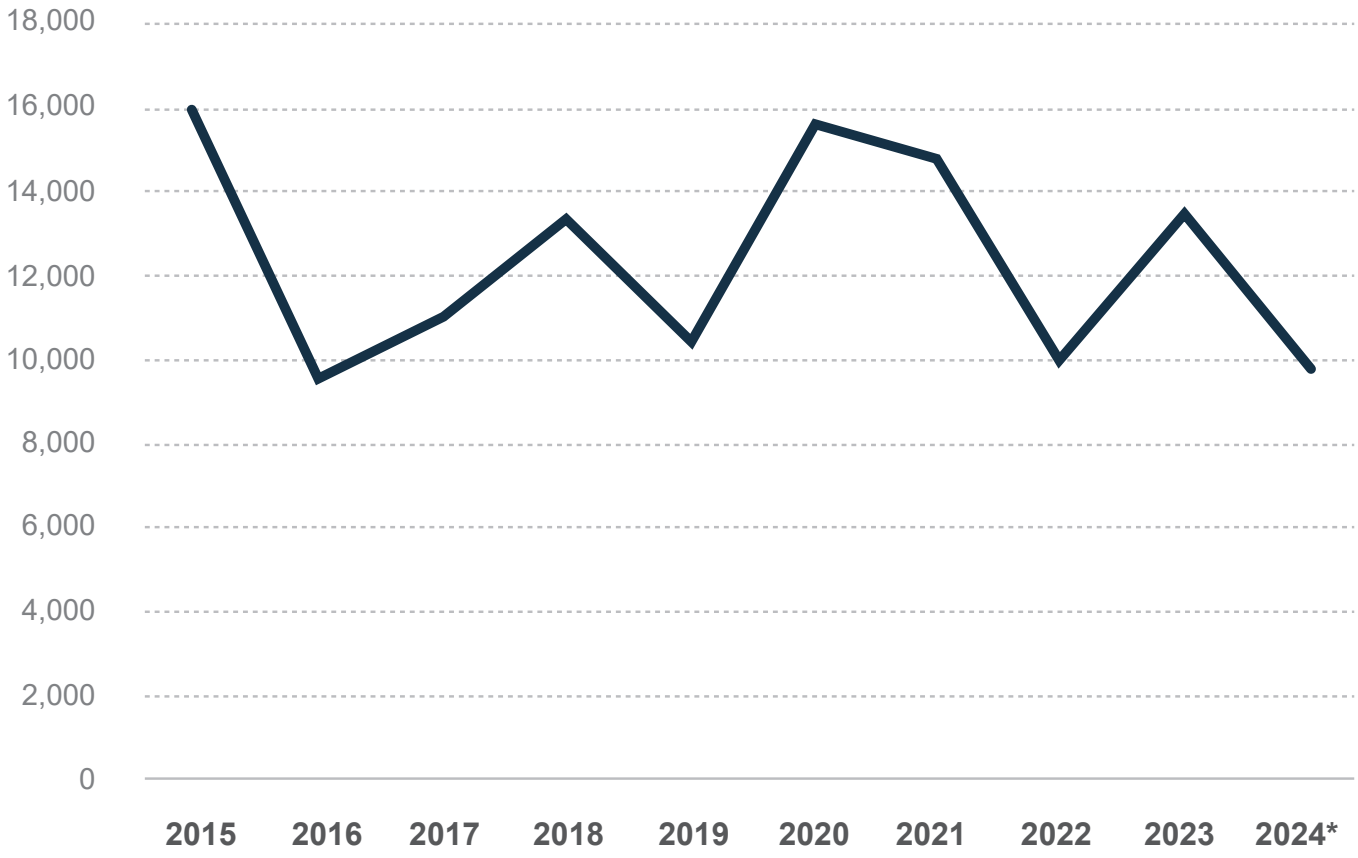



**2024 is interim reporting*
*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10, 2025.*

## Synthetic Cathinones

Synthetic cathinones, commonly known as bath salts, are stimulants that produce effects similar to methamphetamine, cocaine, and MDMA. Users have experienced symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, suicidal thoughts, seizures, chest pains, increased heart rate, and violent outbursts. Severe paranoia may cause the user to self-harm or become violent towards others. Synthetic cathinones are available as white or brown powders or sold as ecstasy in the form of a pill. Some of the street names associated with synthetic cathinones are Ivory Wave, MTV, Meow Meow, Snow Leopard, Super Coke, Bath Salts, Bliss, Blizzard, Drone, DOB, and DOM. The synthetic versions are chemically related to cathinone, a substance found naturally in the khat plant, a shrub grown in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula where users chew its leaves or brew them into tea for mild stimulant effects similar to caffeine. Submissions of synthetic cathinones to DEA forensic laboratories have been trending downward since 2020 with a slight increase in 2023 reaching nearly 13,200 submissions. In 2024, DEA forensic laboratories have received approximately 7,300 synthetic cathinone submissions, a significant downward trend (see **Figure 50**).

## Figure 50. Synthetic Cathinones Submitted to DEA Forensic Laboratories, 2015-2024




*2024 is preliminary and subject to change
Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10, 2025

# CONTROLLED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

## Overview

Controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) are available only by prescription and include substances with varying levels of potential for abuse and physical and psychological dependence, as defined by the CSA. The most-misused CPDs are hydrocodone products (e.g., Vicodin); amphetamine products (e.g., Adderall); and oxycodone products (e.g., Percocet). CPDs can be diverted from legitimate sources, illegally purchased online, obtained from friends and family members, or procured through fraudulent "doctor shopping". DEA encourages the public to safely remove unneeded medications from their homes as a measure of preventing medication misuse and opioid addiction.

**EVERY DAY IS TAKE BACK DAY**

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Program reflects DEA's commitment to Americans' safety and health, encouraging the community to clean out their medicine cabinets and turn in - safely and anonymously - a record amount of prescription drugs.

## Abuse and Diversion of CPDs

The misuse of CPDs decreased after 2020 but has remained fairly stable over the last three years. The 2023 NSDUH indicated that 14.4 million people in the United States misused prescription drugs in 2023, a slight increase from 14.2 million in 2022 and 14.3 million in 2021, but a large decrease from 16.1 million in 2020. Prescription pain relievers were the only surveyed CPD category in which misuse increased, from 8.5 million in 2022 to 8.6 million in 2023.

Across all CPD categories surveyed, prescription pain relievers were the most commonly misused CPDs by people over the age of 12. Hydrocodone products, oxycodone products, and codeine products like cough syrup were the top three misused prescription pain relievers, according to self-reports in 2023 (see **Figure 51**). Survey respondents who misuse CPDs for pain relief reported obtaining their CPDs most often through prescriptions or theft from health care providers (47 percent), primarily via prescription from one doctor. This statistic marked the first time in the past three years that more respondents reported obtaining misused pain relief products via prescription rather than from friends or relatives (39 percent). About eight percent of survey respondents report buying CPDs from a drug dealer or stranger, which could include sources such as dark web markets.

### Florida Man Charged with Conspiracy to Distribute Oxycodone for Prescription Drug Diversion Scheme

On May 16, 2024, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, District Attorney of Nassau County, Nassau County Police, and DEA announced a three-count indictment charging the defendant of a wide-ranging conspiracy in which he and his associates surreptitiously commandeered the e-prescribing credentials of doctors throughout the country, and then used those compromised accounts to issue and fill thousands of prescriptions for narcotics and other controlled substances, including oxycodone and promethazine with codeine syrup. These highly abused substances were then diverted into the illicit market, where the defendant often advertised them for sale to street-level resellers and buyers on his social media accounts and elsewhere.

*Source: U.S. Department of Justice*

**Figure 51. Top 10 Misused controlled prescription drugs, Self-reported to National Survey on Drug Use and Health**

| CPD | Common or Trademark Name* | Category |
|---|---|---|
| Hydrocodone Products | Hycodan, Lorcet-HD, Lortab, Vicodin, Vicoprofen | Pain Reliever |
| Amphetamine Products | Adderall, Dexedrine, Vyvanse | Stimulant |
| Oxycodone Products | Endocet, OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Roxicodone | Pain Reliever |
| Alprazolam Products | Xanax | Tranquilizer |
| Codeine Products | Methyl morphine, Promethazine with codeine | Pain Reliever |
| Tramadol Products | Conzip, Tramadol, Ultram, Ultram Er | Pain Reliever |
| Clonazepam Products | Clonopin, Klonopin | Tranquilizer |
| Zolpidem | Ambien, Ivadal, Stilnoct, Stilnox | Sedative |
| Buprenorphine Products | Buprenex, Suboxone, Subutex, Temgesic | Pain Reliever, Opioid Dependence (Treatment) |
| Lorazepam Products | Ativan | Tranquilizer |

**Most of these substances come in generic forms*
*Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2023), DEA Drugs of Abuse (2022 Edition)*

## Increase of E-Script Misuse and Identify Theft

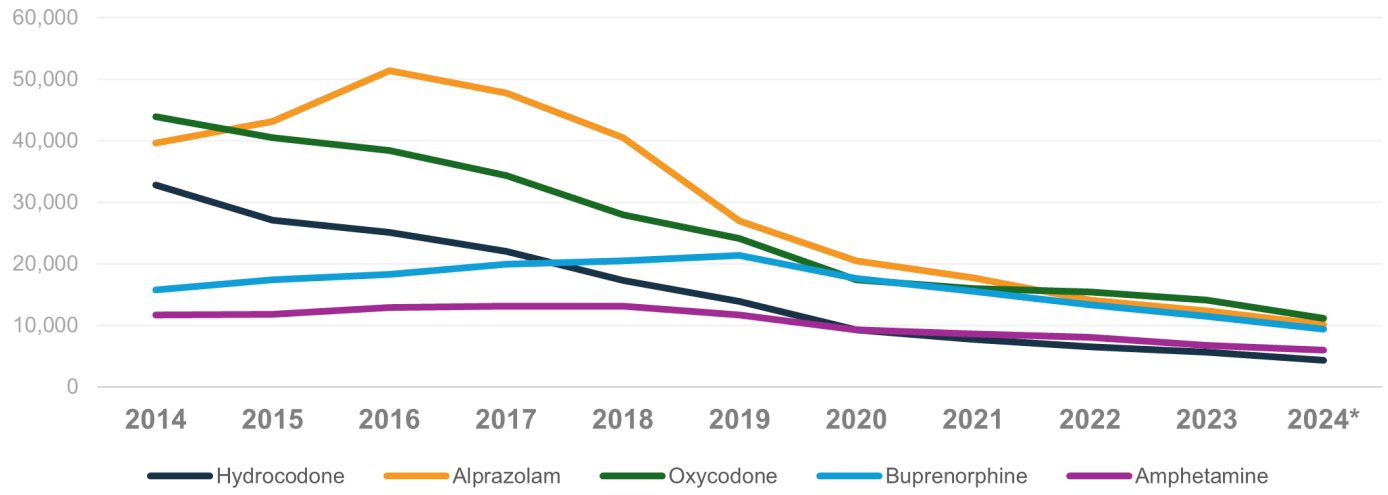
DEA investigators observed an increase in fraudulent electronic prescriptions (e-scripts) between 2023 and 2024. DEA registrants in 27 states reported fraudulent use of their registration numbers and identities on prescriptions submitted via e-script between 2020 and 2024. The primary drugs issued by fraudulent prescriptions are oxycodone (Schedule II) and promethazine with codeine (Schedule V). DEA investigators identified at least 25,000 fraudulent prescriptions of promethazine with codeine across multiple states such as Arizona, Indiana, South Carolina, and Texas.

## Emerging Abused CPDs

NFLIS data showed laboratory submissions for substances associated with CPDs continued to decrease in 2024 (see **Figure 52**). CPDs such as tramadol, which had increased submissions between 2020 and 2021, decreased nearly 70 percent by 2023. In addition, laboratory submissions of amphetamine, alprazolam, buprenorphine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone have decreased

significantly since 2022. In the past, CPDs such as tramadol and oxycodone have been used as adulterants for illicit fentanyl tablets and powders. DEA laboratory testing in 2024 shows tramadol is the only CPD still detected among the top 10 substances reported as adulterants/diluents in tested fentanyl pills and is present in less than two percent of samples.

**Figure 52. Controlled Prescription Drug Exhibits Submitted to DEA Forensic Laboratories, 2015-2024**




**2024 data is preliminary and subject to change*
*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved April 10, 2025*

## Illegal Online Pharmacies

DEA reporting shows an increase in illegal online pharmacies selling and shipping counterfeit pills made with fentanyl or methamphetamine to unsuspecting customers in the United States who believe they are purchasing real pharmaceutical drugs such as oxycodone, amphetamine, alprazolam, and other drugs from legitimate pharmacies. Fake medications may merely be ineffective, or can lead to serious health risks, including fatal and non-fatal poisonings, harmful side effects, and even death.

DEA issued a Public Safety Alert in October 2024 to warn of an increase in illegal online, often foreign-based, websites that are deceptively targeting American consumers. Many of these sites purport to be legitimate U.S.-based and/or FDA-approved sites, but are working with drug traffickers to fulfill online orders with fake pills. These website operators go to great lengths to make the websites look like legitimate online pharmacies – they offer 24-hour customer service, post online reviews and safety facts, and offer deep discounts to deceive customers into believing they are buying from a reputable business.

## Theft and Loss

The DEA Theft/Loss Reporting Database (TLR) reveals that the number of unaccounted-for ("lost") narcotic prescription drugs (opioids) increased in 2024. The loss of CPDs can be through employee theft, natural disaster, in-transit damage to or hijacking of transport vehicles, accidental breakage/spillage, robberies, break-ins/burglaries, and other causes. According to 2024 reporting, approximately 1.6 million more dosage units have been lost than in all of 2023 (see **Figure 53**). An

increase in the number of legitimate pharmaceutical opioids lost to theft or diversion might be linked to distrust of fentanyl-laced street-level pills creating a renewed demand for licit medications.

**Figure 53. Unaccounted-for dosage units of opioid narcotics, 2014 – 2024 (in millions)**

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opioids | 12.4 | 9.8 | 9.6 | 9.3 | 6.9 | 6.1 | 7.8 | 6.7 | 5.3 | 5 | 6.6 |

*Source: DEA Office of Diversion Control/Theft and Loss Reporting System*

Losses categorized as “in transit” have doubled in 2024, and account for the highest number of unaccounted-for controlled prescription dosage units. While distinct loss events have decreased, each loss has comprised large quantities of product. Criminal actors re-routed over one million dosage units of finished pharmaceuticals during shipment from the manufacturer to the distributor.

The number of robberies and break-ins resulting in the loss of CPDs reported by registrants to the TLR continues to trend downward from 2022. (Note: A robbery, to include armed robberies, occurs when people are present. A burglary/break-in is typically done after hours or at a time when people are not expected to be present.) Break-ins account for the highest quantity of unaccounted-for CPDs over the past two years and have been either the leading or second leading cause of CPD loss every year since 2016.

### Pharmacy Burglary Conspirators Arraigned in Federal Court

On July 30, 2024, DEA initiated the arrests of 42 co-conspirators following two indictments between November 2023 and July 2024. The DEA Little Rock District Office (DEA LRDO) identified more than 20 pharmacy burglaries and thefts of pharmaceutical narcotics in Arkansas. DEA LRDO and the Houston Police Department Northeast Division Crime Suppression Team identified the drug trafficking organization as being comprised of documented local gang members from the 5th Ward area in Houston, Texas and linked numerous other burglaries in 31 states.

The DTO transported stolen pharmaceuticals including oxycodone, hydrocodone, alprazolam, and promethazine with codeine cough syrup to Houston, Texas, where they were sold illicitly. The scope of the burglary ring encompasses the theft of hundreds of thousands of pharmaceutical drugs with a street value of more than $12 million dollars. Investigators also seized 11 firearms, approximately $79,000 in U.S. currency, and custom jewelry retailing at approximately $510,000.

*Source: DEA*

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# ILLICIT FINANCE

## Overview

Each year in the United States, illicit drug sales generate billions of dollars in profit for TCOs and other global criminal networks. These organizations and networks must find ways to launder illegally sourced funds through the financial system. The laundering of funds discreetly into useable assets without detection is a tedious process, so TCOs have come to rely on experienced criminal launderers. For their part, money laundering organizations (MLOs), independent of TCOs, benefit financially by charging a fee for laundering TCO funds without getting involved in the day-to-day operations of drug trafficking.

## Chinese Underground Banking Systems (CUBS)

CUBS were created in response to Chinese banking regulations that prohibit Chinese nationals and companies from sending or investing more than $50,000 annually to foreign countries (a practice known as “capital flight”). By acting as brokers between Chinese nationals attempting to send funds abroad and TCOs seeking to launder illicit proceeds, Chinese money laundering networks resolve the issues of both groups. CMLNs can repurpose capital flight funds through the CUBS into businesses and goods, thereby evading Chinese banking regulations. Having successfully skirted capital flight rules, the assets become a convenient mechanism by which to launder suspicious funds through the financial system, in turn increasing the volume of seemingly legitimate international business operations at CMLNs’ disposal to begin the entire money laundering cycle over again.

## Cryptocurrency

Cryptocurrency has emerged as another tool that is increasingly being adopted by TCOs because of the ability to swiftly and securely transfer funds internationally through an encrypted blockchain, significantly limiting access to transaction information. Mexican cartels and other TCOs trade bulk cash for MLOs’ cryptocurrency, which can quickly be transferred internationally and converted to local currency or other financial instruments. The laundering of drug proceeds has been significantly expedited due to MLOs’ willingness to immediately release an equivalent amount of cryptocurrency as soon as the bulk cash is received.

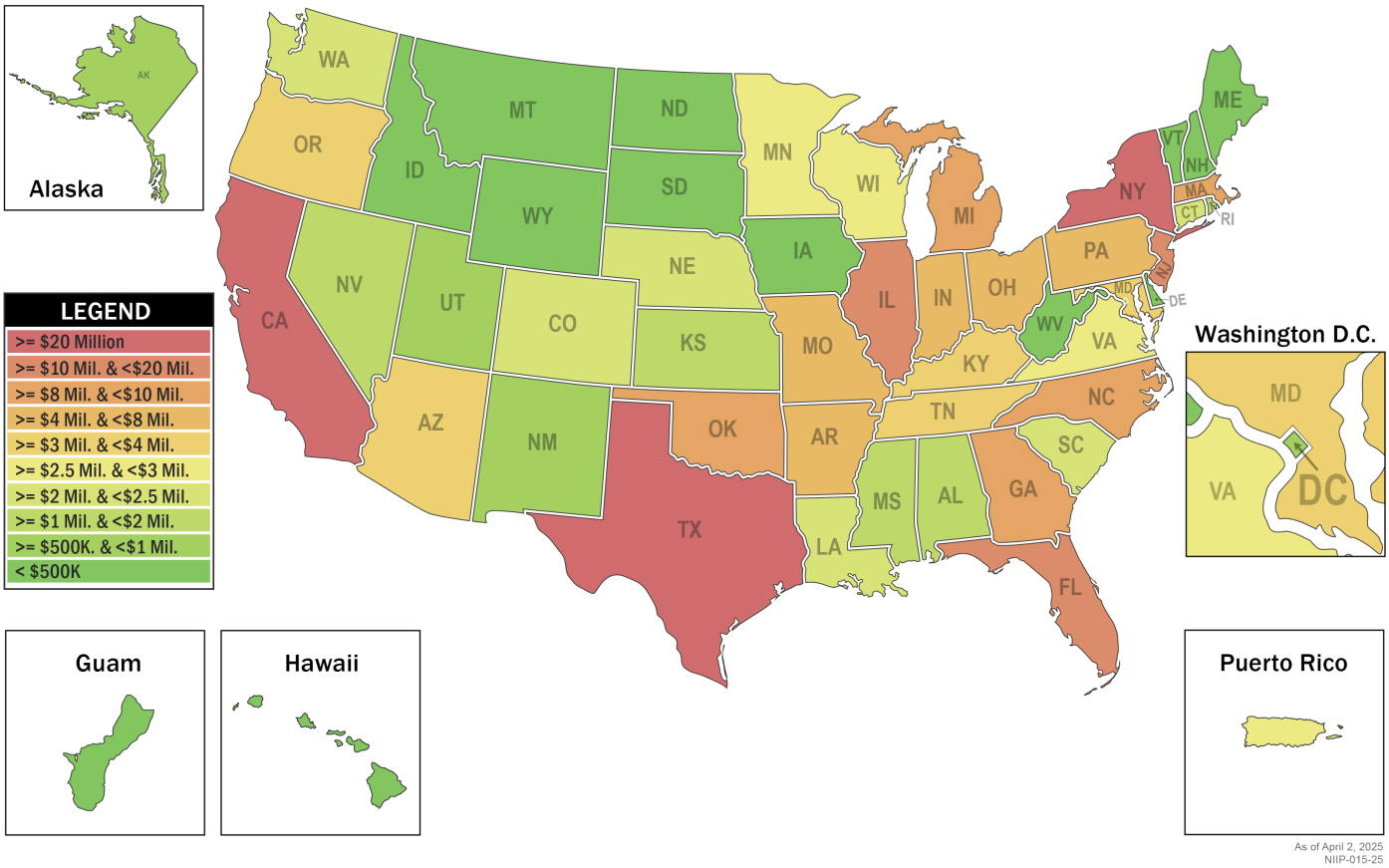
## Trade-Based Money Laundering (TBML)

TBML is a technique that disguises the proceeds of criminal activity by moving the value of the illicit proceeds through international commerce in order to mask their illicit origins. TBML often leverages international trade between Asia and Latin America.

# Bulk Cash Movement

Millions of dollars in drug sales are conducted in the United States each year, generating suspiciously large amounts of cash. This cash is often gathered in key regional locations where established criminal networks operate and is ultimately smuggled across international borders. Enforcement activities aimed at disrupting TCOs therefore target bulk cash shipments to deprive the criminals of their profits. Significant amounts of U.S. currency are also encountered alongside seized drugs, weapons, and other financial instruments. In 2024, DEA reported a total of nearly $280,000,000 in U.S. currency from seizures in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam (see **Figure 54**).

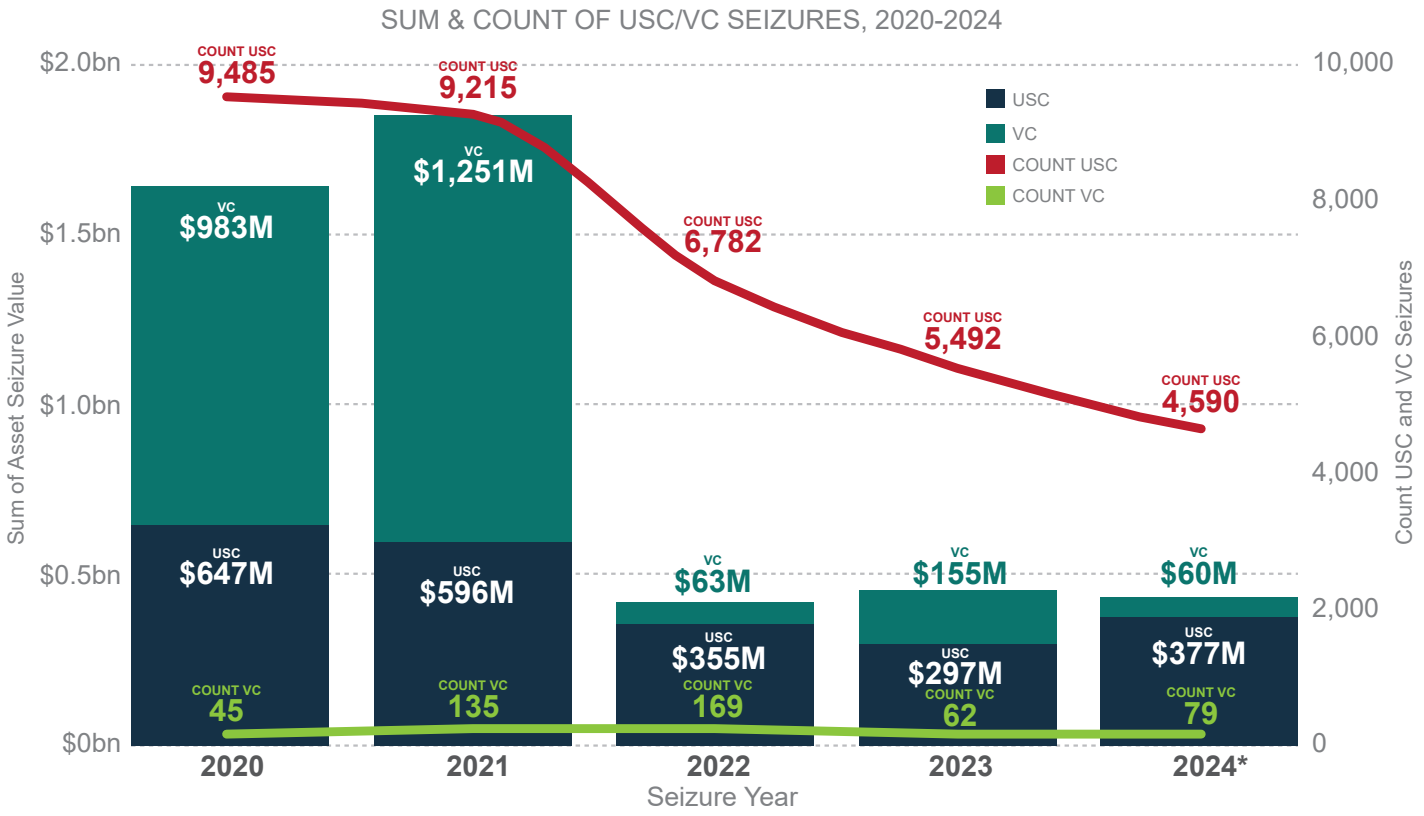
**Figure 54. Domestic U.S. Currency Seizures, 2024**




*Source: DEA, data retrieved April 2, 2025*

According to DEA reporting, cash seizures have declined steadily over the past five years. This could indicate a change in TCOs' money laundering preferences, such as a greater reliance on cryptocurrency. At $2.5 billion, the 2020-2024 virtual currency value (at the time of seizure) is greater than the value of the seized U.S. currency ($2.2 billion) over the same timeframe, which likely accounts for the apparent prioritization by MLOs of cryptocurrency over traditional cash-based laundering schemes (see **Figure 55**).

## Figure 55. U.S. Currency and Virtual Currency Seizure Comparison, 2020-2024



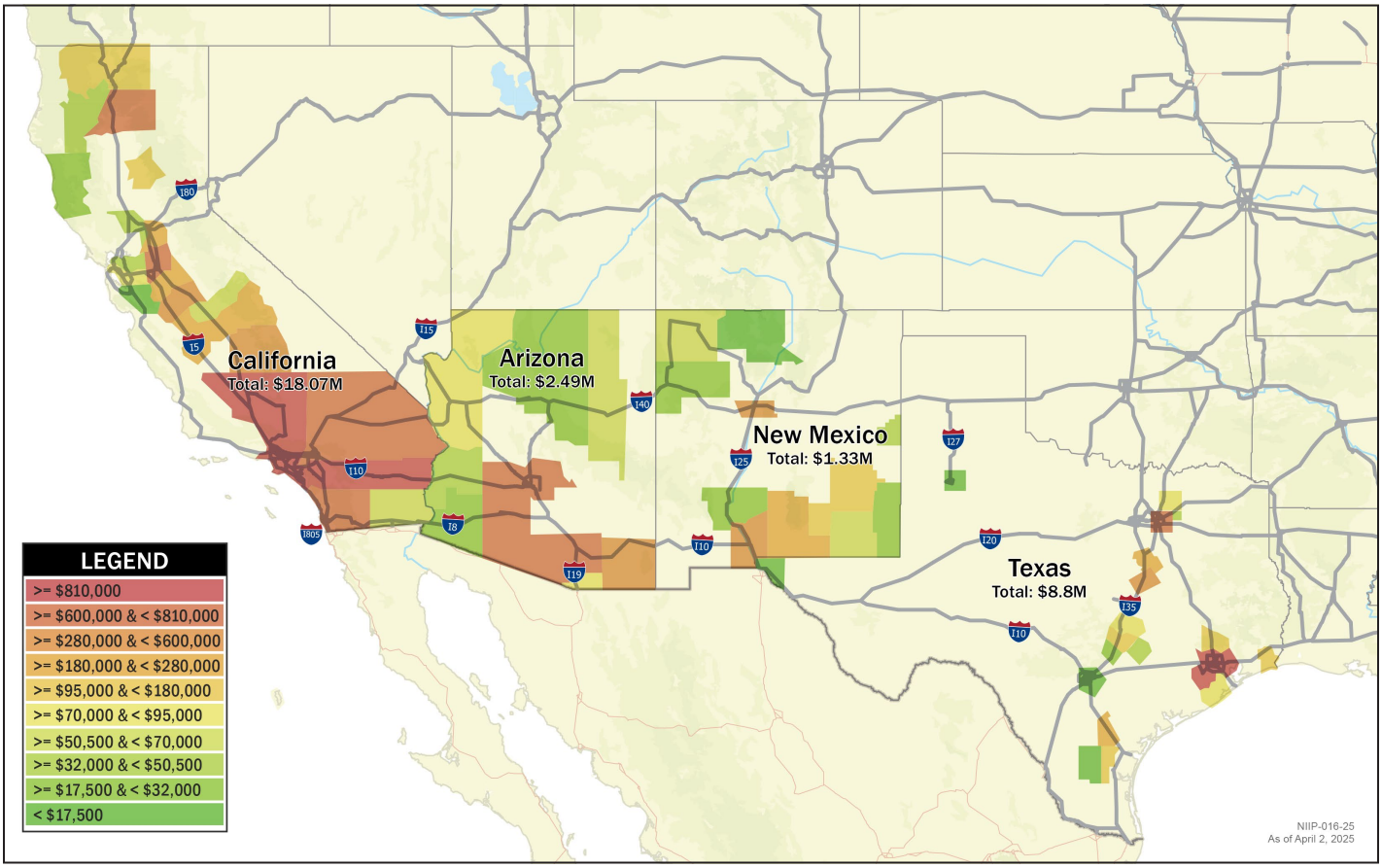

**2024 data is preliminary and subject to change*
*Source: DEA, data retrieved March 21, 2025*

In 2024, federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in the SWB states conducted over 300 bulk cash seizures valued at $30 million, according to EPIC reporting. The most seizures occurred in California, followed by Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico and one-third of these bulk cash seizures occurred in counties within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border (see **Figure 56**).

As DTOs supply the drugs causing untold harm throughout the country, they amass incredible amounts of wealth. DTOs reinvest the laundered funds into their drug trafficking operations or purchase items capable of retaining or appreciating in value. Drug trafficking produces such enormous illicit wealth that the criminal actors most responsible for the historic levels of overdose poisonings and deaths in the United States are, at the same time, spending the resulting wealth on decadent lifestyles, including luxury items. In 2024, DEA seized over $7 million worth of precursor chemicals, over $64 million in real estate, nearly $50 million in vehicles, aircraft, and vessels (including some used for trafficking operations), and over $41 million in jewelry and precious metals.

DTOs are also engaged in a multitude of violent crimes across U.S. communities, and the illicit proceeds of drug trafficking are also spent to procure many of the weapons used by these organizations to commit acts of violence. In 2024, DEA seized over 3,100 handguns, automatic weapons, pistols, shotguns, and other firearms, depriving DTOs of further access to these weapons with which to endanger the public.

## Figure 56. Southwest Border Bulk Currency Seizures, by State/County/Amount, 2024




*Source: El Paso Intelligence Center, National Seizure System*

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# DRUG THREAT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

## Overview

The threat posed to Indian Country by drug trafficking and drug abuse remains a concern across law enforcement, health, and social agencies operating on or near reservations. Native American criminal groups and independent traffickers remain the primary retail-level suppliers of illicit drugs in these communities. Due to the remote geography of many reservations, traffickers must travel between reservations and nearby major cities to obtain illicit drugs from Mexican TCO-affiliated suppliers. Methamphetamine, often sourced from Mexican TCOs and other criminal organizations, and marijuana remain the most widely used drugs in Indian Country.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is one of the oldest bureaus of the United States Department of the Interior. BIA was established in 1824 and provides services directly, or through contracts, grants, or compacts. There are over 574 Federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives in the United States.

## Law Enforcement Priorities

The total number of drug cases opened in Indian Country increased from Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 through FY2019. Starting in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily posed new challenges for the daily operations of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Although case initiations quickly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in the following years, the number of cases decreased from FY2023 to FY2024 due to a refocusing of law enforcement priorities on larger, more complex cases versus traditional single-target cases (see **Figure 57**).

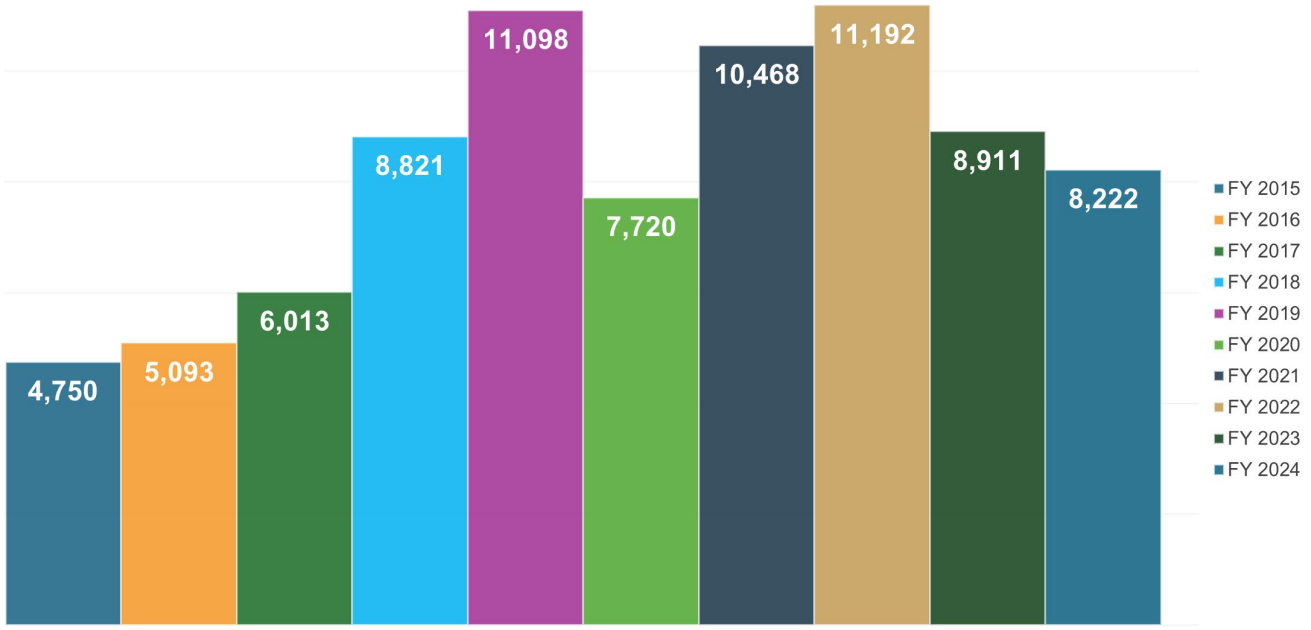
## Impact of Drug Trafficking

Methamphetamine, sourced from Mexican TCOs or other affiliated criminal organizations, and marijuana remain the most widely used drugs in Indian Country. Reporting from across tribal communities indicates other illicit drugs—including fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin—as well as diverted prescription opioids are present to varying degrees and can have devastating effects on these communities. The use and sale of these substances disrupts social structures and contributes to health issues and crime within Indian Country.

BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) mission is to uphold Tribal sovereignty and provide for the safety of Indian communities by ensuring the protection of life and property, enforcing laws, and maintaining justice and order.

The remote geography of many reservations creates both opportunities and challenges for Mexican TCOs and Native American criminal groups involved in the trafficking, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs across Indian Country. In the sparsely populated desert area of the U.S.-Mexico border,

**Figure 57. Drug Cases Opened in Indian Country, 2015 - 2024**




*Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs*

for example, Mexican TCOs smuggle drugs into the United States through reservation land that straddles the border. Further opportunity is provided by the remote, insular nature of most tribal communities, making it difficult for law enforcement to investigate and respond quickly to crimes. Nonetheless, the distance between many reservations and the nearest major metropolitan cities increases the cost, in time and money, for the Mexican TCOs and Native American criminal groups involved in the supply and distribution of illicit drugs to and within reservations.

The widespread availability and abuse of drugs in Indian Country contributes to higher rates of crime on reservations compared to the national averages for similar crimes, recurring dependency, increased violence, and related social issues, such as poverty and mental health challenges. These issues are compounded when outside drug traffickers exploit tribal members by marrying into families which allows them to hide in plain sight and operate more discreetly within Indian Country.

BIA continues to track increasing occurrences of cannabis cultivation in Indian Country, which is a challenging legal issue due to conflicts between tribal sovereignty, federal laws, and state regulations. While some tribes have explored cultivating and selling marijuana, BIA still handles this issue in Indian Country on a case-by-case basis, working in conjunction with each individual tribe's priorities, concerns, and jurisdictional matters. Notwithstanding the complicated legal status of marijuana across reservations nationwide, BIA continues to prioritize marijuana cases with TCO connections, recognizing the impact these groups have on public health and safety in Indian Country.

## Partnership and Collaboration

Drug-related crime and overdose deaths across Indian Country – driven by the introduction of fentanyl and methamphetamine into these communities – continues to challenge law enforcement and public health officials at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels. In 2022, the Blackfeet Nation in Montana declared a state of emergency as the result of a spike in fentanyl overdoses. During the span of a week, 17 people experienced non-fatal overdoses and four people suffered a fatal overdose. Indigenous people accounted for nearly a quarter of all 911 calls for suspected

opioid overdoses, despite comprising only seven percent of the population of Montana. In 2024, through its "Operation Overdrive" program, DEA partnered with the Blackfeet Reservation-Montana and other federal, tribal, and local law enforcement partners to investigate drug-related violence and overdose deaths on the Blackfeet Reservation (see **Figure 58**). From May to October 2024, Operation Overdrive targeted drug traffickers operating within the Blackfeet Reservation responsible for bringing drugs and violence into the Reservation, resulting in the indictments of 11 individuals on various federal charges, primarily involving methamphetamine and fentanyl.

In 2018, the Secretary of the Interior implemented the 2018 Opioid Reduction Task Force Initiative to assist with the opioid crisis in Indian Country by tasking BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) to implement a plan to dismantle and disrupt opioid and heroin distribution networks in Indian Country.

**Figure 58. Blackfeet Tribal Law Enforcement, Bureau of Indian Affairs-DDE, DEA, US Border Patrol, and Glacier County Sheriff's Office during Bureau of Indian Affairs Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) Operation and DEA Operation Overdrive activity on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, July 2024**

*Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs*

## Community Outreach

To combat the illicit drug threat, most Indian Country communities—some with the assistance of Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement services—have implemented "Drug Take Back" initiatives to rid their communities of drugs. Law enforcement and public health agencies in Indian Country have also forged strong relationships with federal agencies to aggressively tackle the drug threat permeating these communities. Collaborative enforcement efforts, such as between DEA's Operation Overdrive and the Blackfeet Nation, show the positive results of interagency cooperation in confronting the drug trafficking, drug-related violence, and drug overdose issues in Indian Country.

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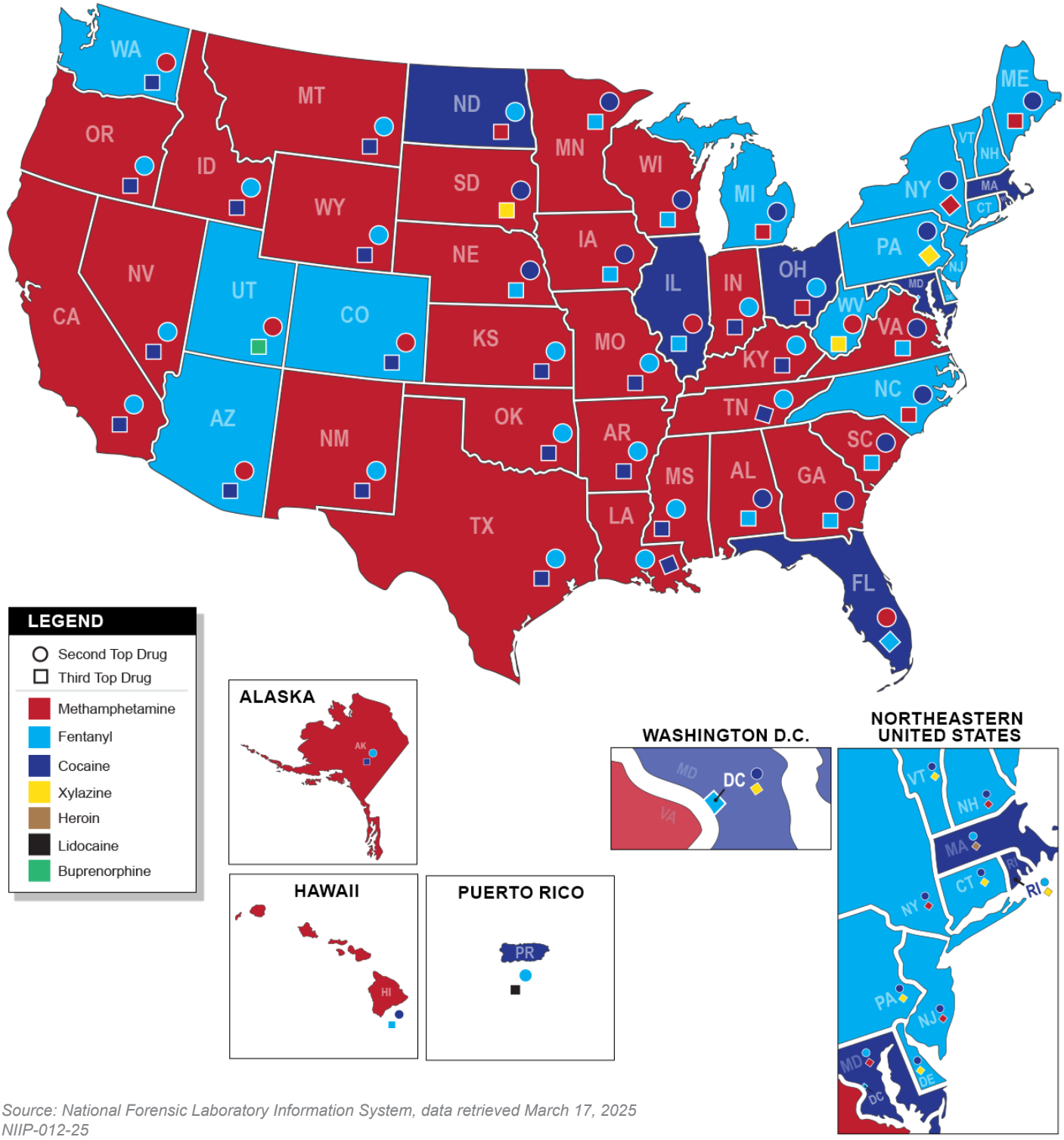
# Appendix A: Top Three Drug Submissions Reported to NFLIS by State




*Source: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, data retrieved March 17, 2025*
*NIIP-012-25*

# Appendix B: Acronym Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| 4-ANPP | 4-anilino_n-phenethyl-4-piperidone |
| BIA | Bureau of Indian Affairs |
| BMPE | Black Market Peso Exchange |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CDG | Gulf Cartel |
| CDN | Northeast Cartel |
| CDS | Sinaloa Cartel |
| CJNG | Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (Jalisco New Generation Cartel) |
| CMLN | Chinese Money Laundering Network |
| CPD | Controlled Prescription Drugs |
| CSA | Controlled Substances Act |
| CSP | Cocaine Signature Program |
| CU | United Cartels |
| CUBS | Chinese Underground Banking System |
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Administration |
| DTO | Drug Trafficking Organization |
| EPIC | El Paso Intelligence Center |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| FDA | Food and Drug Administration |
| FNFM | New Michoacán Family |
| FTO | Foreign Terrorist Organization |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| KG | Kilogram |
| LFM | The Michoacán Family |
| MDMA | Methyldioxymethamphetamine |
| MET | Mobile Enforcement Team |
| MG | Milligram |
| MLO | Money Laundering Organization |
| MPP | Methamphetamine Profiling Program |
| MS-13 | Mara Salvatrucha |
| MSB | Money Services Business |
| MT | Metric Ton |
| NDTA | National Drug Threat Assessment |
| NFLIS | National Forensic Laboratory Information System |
| NPS | New Psychoactive Substances |
| NSDUH | National Survey on Drug Use and Health |
| NSS | National Seizure System |
| OJS | Office of Justice Services |
| OMEX | Omnibus de México |

| | |
|---|---|
| P2P | Phenyl-2-propanone |
| PAA | Phenylacetic acid |
| PEMEX | Petróleos Mexicanos |
| POE | Ports of Entry |
| POV | Privately Owned Vehicles |
| SAMHSA | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration |
| SDGT | Specially Designated Global Terrorist |
| SWB | Southwest Border |
| TBML | Trade-Based Money Laundering |
| TCO | Transnational Criminal Organization |
| TdA | Tren de Aragua |
| TCH | Tetrahydrocannabinol |
| TLR | Theft/Loss Reporting Database |
| USB | Universal Serial Bus |
| USC | United States Currency |
| VC | Virtual Currency |

U.S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration